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PULPIT PRAYERS

By EMINENT PREACHERS

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
NEW YORK:
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I.

WE do not draw near to Thee, our Heavenly Father, though upon an accustomed way, as if we knew Thee. We do not know Thee aright. We know in part, and we teach only in fragments. Thou art greater than that a man should compass Thee with his thoughts. Thou art finer and nobler than anything of which we have had any experience; and there is nothing in all the round of human life that is fit to be a true interpretation of Thee. Our very best things are afar off from Thee. We know what goodness is, and we believe that Thou art good; we know what knowledge is, and we believe that Thou art vital with knowledge; we know what purpose is, and we believe that Thou dost dwell with eternal purposes and decrees; we know the qualities which go to make Thee; but what Thou art in the fulness, in the glorious combination, in the wonderful procession of these qualities, residing in infinite strength and in utmost perfectness, we do not know. What is there in us, nascent creatures, born of the dust, and working slowly our way through ages up to the higher forms of experience and knowledge, that is fit to represent God? Our joy is, that in all respects in which we come short of a knowledge of Thee, Thou art better than anything of which we can conceive. We cannot think too highly of Thee, nor set about the central thought of God too many stars of glory. We cannot praise Thee in exaggeration, nor can we overmeasure the wonder and the glory of Thine infinity. And when we see Thee as Thou art, when the glass is broken, and the veil is laid aside, and we stand

face to face with Thee, then we shall know that we were children upon earth—yea, babes—in our conception of the manhood and glory of Christ Jesus.

And now we beseech Thee to accept us, not because we understand Thee, but because we need Thee. Rest upon us. Brood us. Be patient in waiting for us; for, with differing steps, but all too slowly, we are some afar from Thee, and some nearer—none near. We are all learning, enforced mostly, some voluntarily, few eagerly, none entirely.

O Lord our God, all the sources of our better life are in Thee. Thou feedest the clod by the rains from heaven, but the soul is not of the dirt nor of the earth; and that must be fed by invisible and spiritual influence. Grant unto us, we beseech of Thee, that Divine power which we need. Give to each one that which he individually requires, according to what he is, according to what his history has been, according to the nature of his want and the greatness of it. O Lord, dwell with us as we would dwell with our children, only with that higher wisdom of our Father which is in heaven, and not with the broken and imperfect and passionate wisdom of earthly parents.

So, this day, may we rejoice in Thee, not because we are called, not because we have attained, not because we have a prospect growing and brightening as we draw near to it. May we rejoice in the Lord. Be Thou our breath; be Thou our light; be Thou our joy. Even though the mountains be removed and cast into the sea, may we know how to rejoice in Thee. Though the heavens do part, and though they be rolled together as a scroll, may we know how to rejoice in Thee. For Thou are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Thou changest not; neither is there in Thee any shadow of turning. The sun changes day by day and year by year; but the Son of Righteousness stands, radiating eternal beams. Grant that we may stand

in the strength of God, and not in the feebleness of man's strength.

Accept, we pray Thee, our faint desires, and minister to them strength. Accept the confession which we make of our weakness and ignorance and pride and infirmity and heinous transgression. We pray that Thou wilt forgive us our short-comings, and cleanse us of every evil, and deliver us from the power of temptation, from habits that are wrong, from easily-besetting sins; and grant that we may grow daily stronger and stronger in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Make Thy kingdom more precious to every heart; and, since all may have knowledge and grace and immortality, oh, may we more and more rejoice in Him who has brought God near to us, who has taken our place, who has suffered for us, and by whose stripes we are healed.

Look, we pray Thee, this morning, into every heart that has ventured hither from what reason soever; and do abundantly more for them than they have asked or thought. Some have come from curiosity. Oh, give them a blessing of surprise! Bring home to them something of that truth which shall make them feel that the treasure of God is with them. If there be any that have come here in trouble, wondering if there be any refuge open to their souls, grant them such a view of God's mercy and providence that they shall rejoice in the strength of God. If there be any who are walking in darkness, grant that they may feel that that darkness comes from turning their faces to the earth; and may they lift up their countenances, and look toward God, and feel the shining of His love in their faces, that He may be their light and their comfort. We pray that Thou wilt walk with those who are in the night, and bring them toward the morning of hope and joy. Inspire strength in those who are ready to perish. Lift up those who are bowed down with bur-

dens which are heavier than they can carry—for if Thou dost not take away the burden, Thou canst make it light by giving them more strength.

We pray that we may all learn that lore which is fit for living or for dying, or for the immortal life. May we thus take from this life its best things; and while its weaknesses, its infirmities, and its troubles all go as the chaff from the summer threshing-floor, may its strength and patience and purity and knowledge be garnered in us. So may we be prepared for that glorious land where there shall be no more ignorance, such as stumbles men here; no more distractions, such as unruly passions bring in hither; no more separations, such as divide men in this world; no more envies or jealousies or hatreds or divisions: but where all shall love and be loved, for all shall be lovely, and where Thy kingdom shall shine forth in the glory of the inheritance of the saints. May we all, with our faces turned thitherward, with cries and prayers, with hymns and songs, yea, at times with shoutings of joy, press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

And now we commend ourselves to Thee. Living or dying, we are the Lord's. We are Thine: take care of Thine own until the day of redemption comes; and with unveiled face and open lips in the new language of the other life, we will praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

II.

We rejoice, O Thou most Holy One, that Thou art so tender and gentle. The stretching out of Thine hand is not for thunder; and the looking forth of Thine eye is not with lightning to blast us. Thine eye is full of light even as the coming of the morning; and Thy heart is full of

joy; and it is a Father's heart, and it is full of tenderness. Thy mercies are upon the earth even as the dew and the light, and the beauty of the day; and even in our sorrows Thou dost send down upon us the most precious things that ornament the spirit.

Grant, we beseech of Thee, that we may know how to draw near to Thee from day to day—not by any one path only, but by many. As birds fly through the air whithersoever they will, so may our thoughts evermore find their way to Thee, and find it easily. Everywhere may there be a sense of Thy presence. Everywhere may there be joys, and sorrows that are the seeds of joy.

We pray, O Lord, that Thou wilt grant that we may not be servile, and that we may not think that Thou art pleased with adulation. May we draw near to Thee with sincerity of love and with that filial fear which love inspires. May we be sincere with Thee and honest with ourselves. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt cause us to grow, by the sweet inspiration of Thy Spirit, into all manliness, into all honour, into all truth, into all fidelity, into all goodness unfeigned, into trust, into hope, into cheerfulness, into patience and long-suffering, that the inward man may grow day by day, and that our souls may be as a garden which the Lord's own right hand hath planted.

We pray that Thou wilt strengthen us in the struggles which we are obliged to maintain within ourselves with the evil that is in us; with the deceit, the pride, the vanity, the sordidness, the forgetfulness of things generous and noble, and the remembrance of things selfish and unworthy.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that Thou wilt help all who need help. If there be those who doubt Thee, if there be those who know not what to think of Thee, may they behold Thy life in Jesus Christ as the example and pattern of their own. But who shall doubt its beauty? and who shall doubt their own insufficiency? Who that has striven

to maintain an equable frame like unto that of our Lord does not know the need of Divine help? And may we be turned away from outward reasonings. May we be turned away from the settlement of those things which are hidden in Thee and in the future; and may it be our most earnest desire to know how to build up in ourselves that godlikeness which shall interpret God. And so, O Lord, may those who fear or doubt, may those who are indifferent to the Church and its ordinances, be brought near to their better selves and to Thee, and to a faith that springs from living sources. We know our weakness and want, we know Thy power, and we know that we are in Thy hands. We are glad to believe it. We lean upon Thee in times of discouragement. Thou art the overhanging rock which shelters us in times of distress; and we flee unto Thee as unto a tower from our enemies. In times of weakness and weariness Thou art to us a Father indeed, and Thou dost in Thine own household feed us and sustain us and send us forth again refreshed.

We beseech of Thee that those in this Church who are labouring in the Spirit of Christ for the welfare of men may be filled with perseverance and with zeal and with all bountifulness of soul. We pray that the work which hath prospered in their hands may still prosper. We thank Thee that Thou art drawing out from the world, in its sinful sense, those who were immersed in it for their own destruction. Thou art calling to a higher and better life those that have been oblivious to it; and we pray that Thou wilt go on working with the power of truth, by the Holy Ghost sent down from on high. O Lord, bring light and cleansing and newness of life to those that are in the region and the shadow of death.

Bless all the Churches of this city and all Thy servants that minister in them; and we pray that Thou wilt take away the hindrances, the divisions, the heart-burnings that

are between Church and Church. Grant that the Spirit of Christ may purge out of His servants all evil leaven, and that they may see eye to eye and work hand in hand.

And to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit shall be praises evermore. Amen.

a.

III.

WE rejoice, our Father, that we may look up to Thee as those that watch wearily in the night, and look for the morning; for in Thee there is no darkness, but only light. Joy comes from Thee. From us is sorrow born. We stumble by ignorance and by transgression, and make ourselves miserable; but Thou everlastingly art the Repairer Thou for evermore art building up the things which we cast down; and we rejoice that both by the things in which we are right and by the things in which we are wrong Thou art building us. By Thy discipline, by Thy chastisement, Thou art working, even as by Thy caress. We rejoice that we do not know all of Thee, nor all of Thy way of mercy. We should be sorry if there were no more of Thee than we could compass in our thought. We should be sorry if with our faint and small mercy, if with the slender flame of love that burns amidst glowing passions in our souls, we could understand the grandeur, the fulness, the infinite outstretch of Thy being, and the mystery hid from ages, and to be hid through ages, of Thy riches in the glory of goodness as a healing power throughout Thy realm. We rejoice and give thanks for what Thou art. Thou art enshrined. And though we cannot behold any figure, nor outline even in our thought the way in which we think toward Thee, it is a way of light and growing mercy and goodness; and our souls are glad, yea, and they sing, as we think of Thee, and are burning toward Thee, still hearing at every step of experience, at every

out-look, and at every added thought and emotion, It doth not yet appear; for the fulness of Thy nature is beyond comprehension, and the knowledge of Christ passes all understanding.

And now we beseech of Thee that we may have, every day, some such sense of the fulness of God's mercy and of the power of God round about us as we have of the fulness of the light of heaven before us. Our tapers we trim, and we fear lest the lamp shall go out without oil; but none of us have ever had a thought or a care lest the sun should be emptied, or lest the air should be exhausted. The supply is over-abundant, and the waste is infinitely more than that which we use.

O Lord our God, we pray that we may bear about every day a consciousness of Thy super-eminent power. May our thought of the love of Christ not spend itself in vain arguments and theories and reasonings respecting its origin, methods, grounds, and conditions. O that we may enter into the greatness of the feeling that God so loved the world that He gave Himself in the person of His Son to die for it, to suffer; and though very God, to suffer as we suffer, tempted in all points as we are, yet sinless. May we bear before us this inexplicable marvel; and may the love of God be to us as a heaven full of stars by night, and full of light by day, inextinguishable. So, under Thy canopy, may we develop all our power. Under Thee may we find ourselves able to cope with unbelief, with fear, with all the elements which beset us in this mortal state; and may we have the power of God within us, and the witness of God within us that we are the sons of God; and may we march in the greatness of this hope, and abound in its consolations.

We pray for Thy blessing to rest upon each heart in Thy presence. Though man thinks little of man, though men are trodden under foot of men, and though the cry of

distress falls on heedless ears, there is not a soul so barren nor so poor that Thou dost not look out upon it with infinite compassion; and grant that no one in Thy presence may be discouraged, or think unworthily of himself. Grant that every one may have some sense of the value that there is in Him before God by reason of that which is in God. We pray, O Lord, that Thou wilt thus inspire and lift up the poor, the discouraged, the lowly, and the careless, and bring them into the consciousness of Thy presence and of Thy compassion.

Draw near to all those who are seeking Thee through a dreamland, all of whose march seems as by night, and who stumble and fall often. Thou art the mighty God, and Thou canst renew the strength of those that trust in Thee. We pray that Thou wilt give stability and earnestness to those that waver and are overcome by doubt. We pray that Thou wilt draw near to those who have known Thee, and have fallen from their first experience of love and devotion, and have grown cold and heedless, though not without oft regrets, and not without many resolutions to return to Thee. Vouchsafe to them all, we beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, the quickening influence of Thy Spirit, that they may be brought back to the Bishop and Shepherd of their souls. Be near to any who are seeking to know more and more perfectly Thy righteousness. Grant that there may be those who shall at last find the rest of God, unbroken by strife or by invasion. May there be those who shall sit down beneath the shadow of Thy wings, and over whom Thy banner shall be displayed, and who shall rejoice in the Lord and not in themselves.

Be with all those who are in affliction. Draw near to any households wherein lie the beloved, waiting for the last rite of separation. O Lord, we pray that in darkness there still may be light. While the sisters mourn, may Jesus be with Mary and with Martha again, the resurrection and

the hope of eternal life. And we pray that those who watch wearily by the side of the sick may have strength and comfort and refreshment of soul, and preparation for Thy providential will.

Grant Thy blessing to rest upon all our occupations; upon all our family relations; upon our whole household life. Wherever we are, and whatever we do, may we have the conscious presence of our God and the joy of His salvation.

We pray that Thy blessing may rest upon all Thy Churches to-day; upon all Thy servants that everywhere do preach the Gospel that is in Christ Jesus. Especially remember Thy servants in the city adjacent who labour in word and doctrine with zeal for the quickening of Thy people, and for the calling of men from darkness to light. Give them health and strength and wisdom and Divine luminousness; and guide them from sowing to reaping, until there shall be an abundant harvest.

We pray that Thy blessing may rest upon those who everywhere preach the gospel to-day—upon those who stand upon the verge of civilization; upon those who are in the midst of poverty in scattered populations, and who labour in body and mind, travailing sore, to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ. Be with all those who are in foreign lands of heathen darkness striving to make known the name of Jesus Christ. We pray that Thou wilt give to them the power of faith; and may that faith bring forth appropriate fruit in thine own time, and abide. Send forth that imperious command by which all evils shall sink away, and all goodness shall arise, to the glory of Thy name.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises evermore. Amen.

IV.

O THOU that leadest Thy people like a flock, be gracious unto this flock of little ones. They are Thy pilgrims, entered upon life. How long is the way, and how devious, which opens before them! They know not the way, nor have they any skill or strength to walk therein. And how little do those that love them and watch over them know where are the pits, where are the snares, where are the poisoned things of beauty, where the lion lurks, and where the serpent is concealed! Who knows, and who can tell, what a day may bring forth to them? O Lord of life and light and love, be gracious unto them, and by the unerring hand of Providence lead them in the way. Guard them from outward danger; and, above all, guard them from every inward taint and harm, that they may grow up in obedience to Thy Word, answering to the inspiration and example of their parents, in all truth and honour and fidelity and reverence toward God.

And we pray that Thy servants who have sincerely promised to bring up these children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord may have the way shown to them. May they be made to feel how more and more faithfully they themselves should walk if they are to be priests to their household.

And we pray that Thou wilt, this morning, remember the prayers that have been offered up by loving hearts in behalf of children that are in this great congregation. May all those who have beheld this ceremony, and to whom it has brought the thought of their own dear ones at home, receive an admonition. May they remember such vows as they have made, whether in the sanctuary or in the secrecy of their own closets. May they search their hearts, to know whether they are fulfilling their promises to God in

regard to their children. And we pray that those who are in our midst may grow up with more and more vigour of piety than they have had, with greater consecration, and with greater fruitfulness in their after life.

We beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest on all our homes. May the spirit of light, of love, of purity, and of duty abide in them. May we be saved from all temptation, from all evil, from the dart that flies to bear destruction at night, from smiting by day, from peril of every kind. Command Thine angels that they have charge of all those who put their trust in Thee, and lift them up in the stony way, lest they dash their foot against a stone.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt look in great compassion upon all Thy servants this morning, and upon each one severally as Thou seest that he needs.

Bring near to us the consciousness of Thyself. Bring to every one faith that the Lord is on his side, and has called him by name, and has registered him in the Book of Life, and has filled him with all love and fidelity, that he shall lack no good thing in all the days of his life. If any are tried, may they have the patience that shall minister to their manhood. May they be able to cast off trouble which is needless, and to recall the fears that wander forth uselessly. May they learn the tranquillity of a supreme hope and trust. May they lean upon Him who is strong for all. And grant that in their weakness they may find Divine strength. Grant that in their utter helplessness they may find victorious power.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt grant to all those who are under a cloud, from whatever reason, the ministration of Thy good Spirit. Grant that they may not vex themselves needlessly; that they may not bring in unneeded fears; that they may study their own growth and development for Christ's sake. May they endure as good

soldiers that which the Master endured, and not count themselves unworthy of suffering, since He suffered all things for all.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt grant courage and hope and patience and endurance to the end unto all, that we may meet the inequalities of life, its rude buffetings, yea, weariness and sickness and death itself, as they should meet them who are the King's sons. Why should we despoil our crown, and cast it into the dust? Why should we tread under foot all those promises that have immortality in them? Grant that we may live in the power of our faith, and that men may behold how it lifts us above the torments that afflict other men into that serener realm where we breathe the air which Thou breathest—the air of eternal peace.

We pray that Thy blessing may rest upon all this great congregation. And now, as we meet for the last time, this morning, for many weeks, we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt hear the united prayer of us all that we may be preserved, pastor and people, and be brought back together again with more strength, with simpler and purer purposes, and with a more earnest endeavour to serve the Lord in our day and generation.

We pray that Thou wilt be gracious to all connected with this Church—those that abide at home and those that go abroad. We pray for all that are separated from us; for all that are upon the great deep; for all that are in foreign lands; for all that are in the wilderness; and for all that are in distant places in our own land.

We beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt bless the Churches round about us. Bless all thy ministering servants. Increase their strength, purify their zeal, and exalt their endeavour. May Christians of every name learn more and more to trust and love one another, and work together in the fellowship of the Spirit.

Bless, we beseech of Thee, our whole land. Quench insubordination and revolution, if they exist. Bring peace in our time, O Lord. We thank Thee for the cessation of war in other lands. We thank Thee that the dark cloud tinged with blood has passed. We beseech of Thee that the wounds may be healed, that the cause of humanity and justice may be attained, and that the nations of the earth may learn war no more, and abide in unity and good-fellowship, to the honour of God and the welfare of men.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. Amen.

a.

V.

WE draw near to Thee, our Father, not bringing alone our care, or our sorrow, or the confession of our sins, as if Thou wert pleased with nothing but this; as if always and every time it pleased Thee to have us bring ourselves down, and call ourselves by every unlovely name. We come because we are drawn by the Spirit of love and hope and joy. We come because we have heard Thee calling us "sons." We come because we believe that we shall bring something to Thee that is reflected from Thee. And Thou shalt behold the travail of Thy soul in us. Thou wilt discern the germs of good which Thou hast planted, and art nourishing. Thou dost look upon the battle which we wage with the world and with the flesh and with the devil; Thou dost behold with sympathy, and Thou art sparing and merciful where the tongue of man is sharper than a two-edged sword. Thou dost lift up where men stone and cast down. Thou dost breathe encouragement where others abandon as outcast and besotted. Thou

art not like man. As high as the heaven is above the earth, so high are Thy thoughts above our thoughts, in mercy, in judgment, and in goodness. It is not in ourselves that we have hope, therefore, but in the light and power of Divine love. Before Thy love come intelligence and the right hand of justice and power universal. Ineffable are all Thy attributes; and we rejoice that all of them are the servants of the Divine, infinite, sovereign love.

So dost Thou govern the universe; and so art Thou everywhere discouraging the iniquities and the transgressions of those that break Thy laws. Everywhere Thou art building up, repairing, restoring again the waste places; and we rejoice in Thee; and it is, this morning, Thine aspect of sovereign mercy and pity and love that brings us to Thee with testimonies of confidence, with expressions of affection, and with hopes that have overcome much fear already. Vouchsafe to us the sense of Thy favour. If we are Thine, bring us into the intimacy of Thy friendship. May every one of us hear Thee saying, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; I call you friends." Take us, then, into Thy confidence and counsel, and bring us to an inward sense of God present; of all Thy thoughts and ways toward us; of Thy yearnings for us; of those groanings in us of the Divine Spirit which are unutterable.

Grant that we may be brought into the preciousness of this knowledge of Immanuel—God present with us. And so may learn, little by little, that it is not the sun that we need, nor the moon, nor the stars in heaven, nor the bread that perisheth, nor the water. Grant that we may more and more feel that God is our salvation; and may we learn to rejoice in the Lord; and, rejoicing, may we hear Thy command echoed from one to another, saying, Re-

joice, and again rejoice, that we too may be joyful, and that men may pause to know what choiring souls they are that sing down from angelic heights, and may listen to those notes of gladness from Thy servants which they themselves would fain sing. So may we live that men, seeing our experiences, shall glorify our Father which is in heaven.

And may we not ask these things as for ourselves alone. May we not desire to build a palace for the soul wherein we may sit, and around which shall come all sweet and pleasant influences to cheer us. May we remember the Master, who went about doing good; who bore Himself more fragrant than the lilies; who was more beautiful than the rose of Sharon; who was the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; and yet who pitied the loathsome lepers, laid His hands on the dead and raised them, gave faith to those who were faithless, restored sight to the blind, put a brother's arm about the outcast, and suffered them to sit by Him, and eat with Him; who bore with Him all purity and sweetness and glory and power and yet made Himself one with the poorest and lowest and most needy. Oh, breathe into us this divine humanity, this mercifulness, this sympathy with those who are in need. So we pray that we may help the fallen; that we may rescue those that are overcome and carried away by their sins, and that we may be worthy to be called the children of that God who maketh His sun to rise upon the just and upon the unjust, and who sendeth rain without discrimination upon all that need.

Wilt Thou accept our thanks for all the mercies which we have severally received. If there are those in Thy presence who thank Thee for escape from a stormy sea, hear their thanksgiving. If there are any here who come forth for the first time, after many, many weary weeks of sickness, and who thank Thee for restoration, hear their

thanksgiving and behold their gladness. If there are any who have come hither after years of absence from the sanctuary, let it not be curiosity that shall abide with them, though that may have brought them. May there be in them a better sense of their need and of their relationship to God.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that Thou wilt be near to any who are strangers in our midst, and who have left their dear ones far away. Grant that if they are heartsick or homesick they may find refuge in God, whose love for them and theirs is more boundless than human love can be.

We pray, if there are any this morning who come bringing burdens, or any who are sorrowing for their sins, that Thou wilt teach them, and bid them shake off the dust in which they sit, and put away the ashes from their head, and anoint themselves, and clothe themselves with the garments of praise.

If there are any who are snared, and who do not know how to break the charm, Thou that dost open the prison doors, teach them how to escape. As Thy servants of old by hymns and prayers broke through the guarded prison, and were made free, so may those who are captives sing their way out, that the thrall of the devil may not destroy them.

We pray that Thou wilt be with any who bring here great burdens of care and anxiety. Well may they place their load upon the shoulders of the Almighty, upon whom is the government of the universe. Thou canst bear our cares without knowing it; but they grind us, and thrust us down into the very ground.

We pray that Thou wilt bless parents in their anxiety for their children. May they not overstep the bounds of trust. May they walk, so trusting God, that their children may learn to trust Him. And we pray for more joy, for

more hope, for more courage, for more aspiration, for more faith—that faith which overcomes the world, and gives victory in defeat.

We beseech Thee to teach all Thy servants how to labour in their several vocations. Grant a blessing to rest upon our various schools. Bless the teachers and officers thereof. May they be filled with the Spirit of the Master. We pray that Thou wilt minister more and more to all those who are ministering.

Remember, we beseech Thee, the efforts that are making for the revival of Thy work in our Churches; for the arousing of the heedless; for the bringing in of wanderers. May Thy servants who are with us in Thy providence, and who are greatly blessed, be kept in humility. May they abide in the thought of God, in the love of Christ, in the communion of the Holy Ghost, and not be puffed up by men's praises, nor delivered to the outwardness of things around them. May the peace of God be in them perpetually, so that they shall not care what men do or say. We pray that Thou wilt greatly bless the sowing of the seed of the Gospel at their hands, and cause it to fall on good ground, to spring up, and to bring forth fruit a hundred fold.

We pray that all Thy Churches may be revived in this city, in the great city near us, and in all our centres of population throughout the land. May Thy kingdom come in all the world.

Lord, forgive us that sometimes our faith faileth. We are tired. Thou dost move on so large a circle that we, running in all our life through but a segment thereof, sit down, overcome by the greatness of the way. Oh, let us lift up our eyes to Him that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and before whom the nations are counted as little things. May we learn to trust, and not to ask for sight. Bring Jew and Gentile, bring the dark and desolate hea-

then, bring all mankind, to a knowledge of the Saviour, and to resurrection from bodily life to spiritual life; and may the whole earth, at last, see Thy salvation.

We ask it in the adorable name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, shall be praises eternal. Amen. *a.*

VI.

ALMIGHTY GOD our Heavenly Father, Thou hast founded the heaven and the earth. Thou sittest Regent. There is none that governs but Thee. Thou art supreme in the heaven and upon the earth. Thou dost manifest Thyself to us, and Thou shalt yet be more and more gloriously revealed to us as we ourselves are opened to the understanding of what is the greatness of the experience of life. We rejoice in Thee, as our fathers have told us of Thy mercy. We rejoice in Thee, as we have ourselves in part experienced Thy goodness. We rejoice that we may trust Thee in days to come. Thou art the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Thy years change not. Justice and love and wisdom and power are eternal with Thee. Thou dost not grow old, and ages do not enfeeble Thee. The same wilt Thou abide unto eternity, as Thou hast been the same from eternity. Under the shadow of Thy wings we put our trust. Day by day we wait upon Thee, and renew our strength.

We beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto all Thy people this day, and bring to their minds the things of the days that are gone by. Bring to their minds the truths that may have grown dim in their souls, that they may overcome the influence of sorrow. And we pray that Thy power may fill Thy people with joy in believing.

Vouchsafe Thy blessing, we beseech of Thee, upon Thy

servants who have been united with us in Christian faith. We pray that in the union and fellowship of this Church its members may find themselves gradually built up for a Christian life, and made strong both for the life that now is and for the life which is to come. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt bless their households, and make their influences more and more benign therein.

We pray for all the members of this Church in their several situations and conditions, at home, abroad, in sickness, in health, in great trouble and adversity, or in great gladness and prosperity. May all events and experiences be blessed and sanctified severally to Thy servants, to strengthen them, and to build them up in faith and in the power of Christian hope unto the end.

We commend to Thee all the Churches round about us. We pray that Thy servants may preach a pure Gospel from the heart and from experience; that they may behold the work prospering under their hand; and that they may continually bear precious seed, sowing it, and rejoicing ere long with their bosoms filled with sheaves.

We pray that Thou wilt bless this city, and the great city upon our border, and this whole land. We pray that Thou wilt everywhere be pleased to spread abroad the spirit of equity, of moderation, of self-government, of knowledge, of kindness, of benevolence toward man.

Grant the light of Thy countenance, not only upon this land, but upon all the nations of the earth. Bring them up out of darkness. Bring them into knowledge. May knowledge drive superstition away. And may there go with it all cruelty and all injustice. May weakness become strength, may ignorance become knowledge, and may all mankind receive the gift which Thou hast borne for ages, for Thy creatures upon the earth.

Let Thy kingdom come, and let Thy will be done until the whole earth shall be filled with Thy glory. We ask it

in the name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be unceasing praise. Amen.

a.

VII.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we thank Thee that Thou hast made the way of prayer so easy. We do not seek Thee afar off. Out of every sorrow we rise instinctively toward Thee. Our joys bear us up. All things seek Thee for power, for light, and for gladness. Nor is it in vain. Thou hast been our Counsellor and Companion. Thou hast been our Deliverer. Thou hast been food for us in hunger, and medicine in sickness. In all things Thou hast proved Thyself tender and paternal; and we rejoice that we come, not with faces bowed down or averted. We rejoice that, looking upward, we draw near with the boldness of love to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and help in time of need; and it is a time of need within and without, in our battle with life; in our effort to carry our souls pure and in symmetry before Thee in all the great way in which we walk, jostled and harassed with infirmities, with habits, with social bias, with that which brings temptation by the eye, by the ear, and by the hand. We find that we need Thee in our inward conflicts. In the attempt to bring into subjection to the law of Christ every thought and every feeling, we find ourselves unlearned and unskilful, making mistakes, yea, and going contrary to our knowledge and to our best convictions; and every day is a witness, not only of our infirmity, but of our transgression. We need Thee in striving to subdue the unruly passions, to regulate the appetites, to bring forth all the fruit of the Spirit, and to walk with God while yet upon earth; and we rejoice that we may come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain this needed help.

We are witnesses, O Lord, that Thou hast never forborne. We remember Thy mercies to us every year; and our hearts overflow in the retrospect with gratitude to Thee, Thou most tender and most blessed of friends. Thy love has been the very air which we have breathed. Thy care and kindness have conveyed us in our weakness, in the midst of ten thousand destroying agencies, safely, until this hour. Thou hast permitted us to enjoy the treasure of Thy soul. We know Thy secret thoughts; we know Thy dispositions; not in their amplitude, not in that glory with which we shall behold them in the life that is to come, but better than anything in this life are they. Thy thoughts toward us are precious. Thy ways are ways of goodness and of mercy. That our souls know right well.

And now we commit ourselves again to Thy care. As infirm, as ever needing, as children that know not yet how to be dismissed from their parents, we draw near to Thee, O Lord our Father, praying for Thy paternal benediction and guidance and forgiveness and love; and may we have such an abiding in Thee, may our thoughts so rest in our God that He shall become all in all; that He shall stand over against every sorrow, every joy, every hope, every aspiration, every mistake or sin, still meeting us at every point with His own self, that we may through Him overcome all things, and be perfected for the Divine love in the life that is to come.

We pray that Thy blessing may rest upon all that are gathered together this morning; and to each of them severally, as he needs, according to Thine own insight, grant Thy presence and Thy blessing. Grant, we pray Thee, to those who know Thee a realization again of the riches that are hidden in Christ Jesus. May they renew their faith. May they stand stronger in their purpose of a bondage of love to Him who loved them.

Grant that the households which are here represented may be households of faith, and that the indwelling of Christ may be in every one of them. We pray that Thou wilt strengthen each one of Thy servants for the day and for the conflicts that are allotted to him; and may every one have that sense of God which shall make him victorious over himself, over the flesh, the world, and the devil.

And we pray, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon all those that are young, and that are going forward in the way of life. May they found their career upon honour, upon truth, upon purity, upon piety; and may they grow up to a better condition than we have attained whose places they shall take.

Remember the little ones, and bless them, as Thou didst, upon earth, when Thou didst take them upon Thy knee, and lay Thy hands upon them. Bless them every day.

We pray that Thou wilt accept the offering which has been made this morning by Thy servants who have brought their children here to dedicate them to the service of God, and who have promised to themselves in the midst of their brethren that they will bring up these children in the way of the Lord, in purity, and in all piety. May the lives of these dear ones be precious in Thy sight. We pray that they may be strong, and grow up to be a strength to their parents and a comfort to them to the end. May all children that have by mothers and by fathers been secretly consecrated to the ways of God in righteousness be remembered by Thee, and convoyed in the midst of the temptations that are incident to extreme youth. And we pray that they may be reared in honour and in the faith of Christ.

Bless, we beseech Thee, all the Churches round about us, whose doors are open this day; and may the messages

delivered by them be of Thy spirit, and sanctified in the hearts of all that shall listen to them. We pray for Thy blessing to rest upon all the Churches of this nation.

We pray that Thou wilt bless every effort which is made for the diffusion of intelligence, and for leading men up from lives of base indulgence to lives of wisdom and morality and godliness.

We pray for Thy blessing on all the nations of the earth. Thou art drawing them nearer and nearer to each other, but may they not be drawn near for smiting. We pray that the signs of war may be taken out of the heavens. We pray that the garments rolled in blood may no more appear. We pray that the red banner may be folded and laid aside. We pray that men may outgrow ignorance, and superstition, and all the train of mischiefs which belong to them. May oppression cease; and may all nations be filled with kindness and with purity and with wisdom. And may the day come when all the earth shall see Thy salvation.

We ask it in the adorable name of Jesus, our Lord, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. Amen.

a.

VIII.

WE join with those, O Lord our God, who stand around Thee; who are in Thy presence, even when scattered wide abroad, fulfilling Thine errands; but who, whether near or far, for ever love and praise Thee. We desire to have a sense of Thy graciousness, of Thy great goodness to us—especially of that undeveloped goodness of the future which is dimly described in words of promise that have not yet blossomed into visible fulfilment. We desire to have a sense of that which Christ hath made known to us by His

words of endearment—our unity with Him, the fellowship and likeness that are to be eternal. For all these things we desire, O Lord our God, not alone to render Thee express thanks in the great congregation, but to bear about in our hearts always the thought of Thy love and of Thy goodness. And we pray that we may thus live with praise perpetually exhaling from us. Since we live by Thy bounty, since we live through Thy goodness and love, may we not forget the Hand that protects and blesses us; and day by day may we grow in love, in grace, and in knowledge. Thou art the Witness, Thou All-nourishing One, of the difficulties that lie before each of us in striving after a better manhood. Thou knowest what soil it is that we attempt to cultivate. Thou knowest the struggles of some with passion, or with pride, or with vanity, or with love, or with pleasure, or with a sense of worldly good. Thou knowest what ambitions there are, and what envyings, and what jealousies, and what collisions, and what revenges smothered in the heart! Thou knowest how hard it is to turn nature by grace into spirituality.

We beseech Thee not alone that Thou wilt grant a general blessing, but that Thou wilt grant to each one that grace which he needs in the struggle for life and immortality. Help every one to put away easily-besetting sins. Help every one to put the yoke of Christ upon each unruly passion. Grant that every one may be conscious, day by day, of the guiding presence of our Lord and God; and may we have a consciousness that He guides us, for His own Name's sake, toward honour and glory and immortality.

We pray that Thy blessing may rest to-night upon every member of this congregation. May every heart be opened to receive the dew of heaven as the flowers of the field in summer receive the down-coming dew of night. So let every soul be refreshed.

Grant that as we have begun now to take the step of the new year we may have borne in upon us a sense of Divine protection and Divine guidance. May we look upon all that we have—the things which are nearest and dearest to us—and commit them to the care of the All-caring One. May we submit to Thy providence, and have faith in Thy grace. May we walk before Thee, day by day, to the end of the year, rejoicing in Thee, and count nothing too dear for Thy taking, whatever it may be. May we be able to say, under all circumstances, Thy will be done. And thus may we be kept steadfast in peace, in growing strength, in joy, and in hope, by the power of faith.

We pray that Thou wilt enter every family and make it lighter and brighter and more joyful during the present year than it has been during the year that is just gone; that Thou wilt enter every household, not only for joy, but for chastening, where Thou dost see it to be needful. Prune every vine, that it may bring forth more fruit. Guide this Church in the year that is to come. Mark out its path, ordain its experiences, and grant unto it the presence of the Master. And may Thy kingdom come in all the Churches of this city, and in all the Churches of the great city adjacent.

We pray for all our land. Thou hast been merciful to it in days gone by; nor wilt Thou forsake it in the coming days. We pray that, as it has been a land signally favoured of God, so it may observe all Divine ordinances, and keep them unto the end. Hold it back from presumptuous sins, and from all cruelty and hardness and greediness. We pray that it may be a land in which the light of the glory of the Gospel of Christ shall shine, so that other lands, beholding it, may be led to the Saviour, and by the power of our prosperity be stimulated to truth, and to knowledge, and to industry, and to manhood.

Let Thy kingdom come everywhere. Cut short the

years that linger, and grant that the fulfilment of the prediction may dawn. May the glory of the Lord arise. May all the earth see Thy salvation. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

a.

IX.

THOU God of all patience and of all consolation, how necessary art Thou to this struggling world, where all forms of misery do prevail, and where limitations bring forth mistakes, and mistakes sin, and sin fear and anguish. Behold how as the sand on the seashore for multitude are the people of the earth. Behold how they move upon each other even as the sand when driven by waves under fierce storms, grinding with perpetual attrition. How selfishness doth undermine all goodness! How pride doth beat down from its height upon all that is lowly! How men do press each other in all the ten thousand relations of life! How the heart is full of thoughts of anger and revenge! How men send forth into life every one of the things that make human experience harder and heavier to be borne! How hope blossoms early and early lets fall its blossom! How sicknesses and sorrows and mistakes and the quick-coming end in the midst of life and inharmony and confusion are everywhere found, until the whole creation is filled with misery!

Dost Thou brood such a world, O Lord our God? Dost Thou content Thyself with such fruit? We rejoice to believe that before Thine eye, far beyond our vision, there rises the sweet clime of eternal summer. We rejoice to believe that as Thou dost sit beholding the present wretchedness of men, Thou seest the ends whereunto they are steering, and dost rejoice in their future, so that in comparison with the numberless ranks of men who shall move by-and-by in the perfected state, all the tears, the

groans, and the sorrows of this life are not worthy to be mentioned. Because we are surrounded by troubles, and are too small to look above them, this world seems to us a pandemonium; but because Thou sittest upon the circle of the earth, and nations are as grasshoppers in Thy sight, and the eternity and infinity of things is before Thine eyes, this world is but a speck and blur upon the whole; and even this shall yet ripen and round to perfection; and groans shall change into music, and tears shall be of joy, and hands doubled to smite shall be opened for clasping, and the whole creation shall rejoice, since Thou art leading them, as a tender shepherd leads his fold, in green pastures and by the side of still waters, to that future toward which we are going. By faith we trust. Without seeing or knowing we believe. We hope. We are saved by hope. If that which we see and know were the best that may come to men, if the earthly fruit were all that there is, surely life would not be worth having; surely the future would not be worth dying for; surely it would not be worth Thy thought and care, Thou Burden-bearer through love. But if there is beyond the present, running through the ages, a fairer clime and a sweeter rest for men who are built up from nothing, and carried through all the stages of discord to immortality, from harsh sounds to the glorious melody of the chanting host in heaven, then there is reason for Thy patience. Thou canst smile while the earth rocks with smoke and with all the fumes of iniquity. We rejoice in hope. We are by hope saved from disappointment, from doubt, and from unbelief; and our souls are resting upon God, not because we see all the way in which He shall travel—for the greatness of that way is too much for us—but because He sees it, and we are led to believe that all shall yet be well.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt grant to every one in Thy presence those blessings which in our conditions

and circumstances we most need. May we strive, not after Thy Trinity, nor after Thine infinity, nor after the everlasting foundations of Thy government, but after Thine element of love, in which all things consist, and which is the hope, the secret, the solution of the ages; and may we seek to put down selfishness, and undue pride, and all envyings, and jealousies, and quarrellings, and murmurings, and every conflict whatsoever, and subdue within ourselves every thought and every passion to the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we pray that Thou wilt give us day by day a sense of Thine own compassion, that we may not hinder ourselves from coming with confession of our sins and of our constant mistakes for fear that Thou wilt be weary of us. There are none of us that know how to have compassion upon our children as the Lord knows how to have compassion upon them that seek Him. And grant that we may have a sense of Thy pity as well as Thy justice. May we have a sense of Thy *saving* mercies, of Thy *loving* kindness, and of Thy *tender* mercies. We pray that thus our souls may be inspired by the fear of evil, and yet more by the love of good, and more still by the sweet attraction of the all-drawing soul of God. Thus may we day by day be at peace within ourselves; may we have the sweet disposition of inward joy; and from our eye and tongue may there go forth the law of kindness in our households, that those who live with us may partake of our enjoyment and minister thereto.

We pray that Thou wilt help us to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—not under the thought of a scowling God, or of an unforgiving Hand heavier than an iron sceptre. May we teach our children to look up and rejoice in Thy tender spirit of love; and we pray that that spirit may help us to come to Thee, not through fiery temptations that come down upon us amain. May we resist evil, and may we be able to find the right

path, and abide in it, by the light of Thy countenance shining upon it.

We pray that Thou wilt grant to every one in the Divine presence this morning that special and personal succour which shall enable him to bear bodily infirmities; to bear limitations; to bear poverty and sickness and weakness; to bear disappointments and overrulings; to bear mortifications of pride and feelings of shame; to bear the unfed hunger of the soul; to bear yearnings that are not satisfied, and longings that bring forth no fruit. We pray that Thou wilt help any that are wounded in heart, any whose affections are crushed by bereavements, or by what is worse than bereavements; any who are made sad and sorrowful by death; and any who are crucified by life. We pray that Thou wilt draw near to them all. Thou knowest every want of every soul. Thou canst call it by its own name; and Thou canst do to each one that which each one needs to have done. If there are any that are in darkness, let the light of hope, if not of certainty, shine upon them. Give them a sense that their morning is begun. Lead Thou them.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost shall be praise evermore. Amen.

a.

X.

WE desire, our Father, to draw near to Thee by that new and living way which is open through Jesus Christ. It is not the way of fear, nor of doubt, nor of superstition, but of love and trust. We are children seeking our Father's knees. Reach forth Thine hand and help us; for Thou art afar off, and by nature we know Thee not. Breathe upon us that Divine influence by which we shall recognise God. Give to us something of that which is in Thyself,

that we may know Thee when Thou art present. Do not stand before us unrevealed. May every heart in Thy presence not mistake Thee, but know Thee for what Thou art. May every one that beholds Thee through tears, this morning, hear Thee calling him by his name. May every one that is kept from Thee by conscious transgression feel the power of Thy nature, and the glory of Thy grace drawing him until he forgets himself, and is wrapped in love and admiration of Thee, and lives in Thy grace and mercy. May all those that are hindered, doubting until Thou shalt reveal Thyself to them by some outward sign, be surprised this day in Thy presence, that their hearts spring forth to Thee and know Thee before even their understandings are awakened. May there be this hidden contact of our souls with Thine; may we take hold of God, not by reasoning, but by love and sympathy. O Thou that shinest by the sun upon the earth and causest the vapour to arise and to seek in the heaven the power of use, so shine upon us that there may go forth from our affections those Divine influences that shall act down upon our life afterwards again in multiplied blessings. We pray for Divine insight. We pray for that sense of faith—that knowledge of the soul. Grant that we may behold Thee in the heaven and upon the earth; and may we also recognise Thee in ourselves and in all things which are around us; and may we rejoice in Thee.

If there are those from whom Thou hast been hidden, arise this day and shine upon them. If Thou art near, and Thy servants know Thee not, from any cause whatever, oh! grant, we beseech of Thee, that there may be an interpretation of Thee to them. If Thou seemest to have gone forth from any, may they hear the message sent back to them, Behold He goeth before you. Grant that every one may have a present Saviour; or, if the Saviour of any be present, may He be one who is going before, and open-

ing a path, and preparing to receive them. And we pray that more and more our life may be hid with Christ in God. While we are pilgrims, sojourning in this lower sphere, obedient to its necessities, and accomplishing its duties, may our higher and best life be too far above this world to be disturbed by its currents or to be tempested by its storms. May we have that peace of God which passeth all understanding—that peace which Christ breathed upon His disciples, and which He still breathes upon all those that will.

Grant that our life this year may be stronger and richer; that it may be more Christ-like; that we may have that humanity, that sympathy, that love of patience, that self-denial, that truth-loving and obedience which was in Jesus Christ our Lord. May we all, as He, evermore refresh ourselves, day by day, by communion with the Father; and, as He, may we all look above the world, and dwell in the midst of our true associations, that our hearts may be where our treasures are—in the heavenly land.

Grant to all in Thy presence who specially need Thee the mercies that are best for them—the relief, the consolation, the inspiration, the hope, the joy which Thou seest to be profitable to them. May there be none who in their hours of trial shall abandon their faith and desert their Saviour, who never has deserted them. Through good and through evil may they follow Him, knowing that He will never lay a burden upon them which He will not give them strength to bear. So may faith wrought in them through experience grow stronger and stronger to the end.

Make the knowledge of Thy truth wider, more intimate, and more effectual among men. May Christ's spirit more and more go forth with law, and abide in institutions. May the spread of religion upon the earth be the spread, not of superstition nor of bondage, but of liberty in the spiritual

man. May Thy kingdom come everywhere. Oh, grant that wherever the light of the sun shines from day to day, there the Sun of Righteousness may shine with healing in His beams.

Let Thy blessing rest, we beseech Thee, upon all Thy Churches, and upon all that in them minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ; grant that they may have an inward experience of the truth which they speak. May they preach living truth from loving hearts.

Everywhere may those be blest that to-day labour in word and doctrine, under whatever discouragements, with whatsoever weaknesses of body, or in the midst of those that care not for such as they. In Thy providence care for them. Grant that upon them all may rest the power of God, with the refreshment of His promises; and may they who sow seed, going forth with tears, speedily return rejoicing, their bosoms filled with sheaves. May Jew and Gentile be gathered in; and may all the earth see Thy salvation.

And to Thy Name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

a.

XI.

We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for all the mercies of this day. We thank Thee for the sanctuary, and for the sanctuary of home; for the privilege of thought and meditation; for communion with Thee; for rejoicing; for the fellowship of song, one with another; for the word of instruction. For all the blessedness of this day of rest from care and labour, we render Thee thanks. We are convened again in this place which Thou hast made sacred, and where Thou hast granted blessings innumerable to us, to ours, and to multitudes that are no longer with us, because they are with Thee; and we rejoice that we may

lift up with confident expectation our prayers to Thee, not as though Thou didst need persuasion, but because Thou dost desire communion. Even things which Thou art ever giving better come to us upon our asking; and we rejoice that thus Thou dost take us into fellowship with Thee, and mingle Thy nature with ours, and by Thine inspiration lift us up toward Thee.

We pray that Thou wilt give us, to-night, an insight of truth, and bring us near to it, that we may feel its power. We pray that Thou wilt help us to look out for those things in which we are neglectful and forgetful, and for those things in which we go against light and knowledge. Grant, we pray Thee, that we may have our whole nature intoned by the truth of God, and be lifted above the temptations of carnal and secular things. May we stand in the full manhood which hath been ordained for us in Jesus Christ. Look upon us, we beseech of Thee, as Thy sons, chastising us as Thy sons. Do for us, both by kindness and by severity, whatever is needed to make us worthy children of our heavenly Father. And may we feel that Thy severity toward us is the severity of love, and not of wrath and vengeance. May we dismiss from our conception of God all those barbarous thoughts and feelings which men in their terror and ignorance and superstition have affixed to Him. May we behold Him as made manifest by Jesus Christ, and rejoice in Him as the Saviour, the Leader, the Nurse, the Brother, the Friend, the Helper.

We rejoice, O Lord our God, that Thou art in the greatness of Thy power carrying upward and forward the work of purification and elevation in the human race. Thou dost not love that which is base and evil. Thou art purging the world of such things. Thou wilt not suffer iniquity in Thine own. By no means wilt Thou clear the guilty; but Thou wilt lead them from transgression, and out of temptation. Thou wilt make plain the difference between

right and wrong, between virtue and vice, between sin and holiness; and Thou wilt let it be known throughout the earth that Thou art on the side of purity and goodness, and that Thou art opposed to evil and wickedness.

We rejoice that Thou art such an One. We rejoice that Thou art making it easy for men to go from darkness to light. We rejoice that Thou art encouraging Thy people, and helping them to pass from a state of guilt to a state of adoption, through obedience in Jesus Christ.

And now we pray that all of us may so learn the Lord Jesus Christ that He shall make us free by that freedom which love bestows on all. And deliver us in the hour of temptation. Deliver us from our ignorance. Deliver us in the midst of perplexities. Be our Deliverer in the way of life. And when we come to the hour of departure, accept us, not as unto death, but as unto eternal life.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

a.

XII.

O LORD God of our fathers, we draw near to Thee this morning with all the visions of our childhood, inculcated by love, with the beliefs which have sprung up from our own experience, and with the beliefs which have sprung from our watching and observation of Thine administration around us. Clouds and darkness are about Thy throne; yet, in our own innermost soul we believe that justice and judgment are the habitation thereof. Environed by difficulties; unable to match and fit the events of life with Thy majestic law, unable to discover the reasons of seeming inconsistency, and of the strangeness that to creatures like ourselves must ever attend the administration of the infinite; yet, O Lord our God, amidst doubts, amidst inquiries searching and often sickening, we rejoice that from the

soul we are still confident. We trust, we believe, and in blessed hours we *know*, that Thou art, and that Thou art the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Thee; and in this supreme trust our souls are held steadfast. Blown about a little at the top, and in the branch—yea, with all our leaves fluttering, yet by the root we hold steadfast and are not overthrown.

And now we desire, O Lord our God, to make mention of all those other experiences—the joy of Thy presence; those days of calm; those days of sweet spiritual delight; those hours of vision; all the intimations which Thou makest of Thyself to us through friendship, and through duty, and through labour, and through suffering and sickness even. At times the whole round of life is as empty and as barren as the sand of the desert; and at other times all things are like an open book of revelation, and we read the cradle, and we read the very ground upon which we tread; the heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth showeth Thy handiwork, and all things speak to us of Thee, and all things comfort us.

In all these changes, day by day, we rejoice to believe that we are not like a bark without a rudder, floating helpless on the sea. There is a thought that guides our thought. There are rules and paths, laws and plans, there is a guiding Intelligence and overruling Father; and we are not as helpless as we seem, nor are we as aimless as we seem; but in Thy supreme providence all things are working together for good. It is enough for us, though we know not, that we believe. When we behold the fabric unrolling from the loom we cannot tell how it was made, though it was made before our eyes; and how much less when it is the universe, when it is Thou that art working, and when the events of the present time are related to those times which are far back, and to the days which shall yet for a long time delay to come, can we understand what

is being done! The greatness of the way is our confusion; and we pray that we may be delivered from the conceit of ignorance; from the supposition that we can find Thee out, and that Thy ways are less than infinite. And so may we come to have a childlike trust in God and in His goodness, wisdom, and overruling government. May we be steadfast in the duty of to-day; and for the future may we have a spirit to believe that that which shall come is that which it is best should come. May we believe that in the life to come mysteries shall disappear, that solutions shall arise—yea, that we shall need no instruction, that *being* itself will be plainer, that the joy of Thy salvation will rub out the rude memory of days gone by, and that we shall think no more of this earth than the blossoms of summer think of the winter in which they lay locked.

O Lord our God, grant us this supremacy of faith, this trust in God because He is God. May we be so stayed upon Thee that no rude experience, nothing changing around us, shall change us; and may we be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that it is not in vain.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy presence and Thy benediction to every soul that is before Thee. Into each heart enter; or stand calling each by name; and may every one in this building feel that he is called of God to faith, to hope, to love, to purity, to truth, to patience, to full manhood in Christ Jesus.

We pray that Thou wilt encourage those that are tempted. Lead by the hand those that walk in the twilight and know not the path. Behold graciously those that are bent down by trouble; and if Thy rains have descended rudely upon the blossom, let them make up by watering abundantly the root. Grant to all who desire Thee and seek the evidence of their acceptance of Thee, the increase of Thy Spirit and the witness thereof. We

pray that Thou wilt grant to all of us according to our several relations in our households, and according to our affairs in public as well as in private life, the grace and the wisdom which we need. Pour out Thy Spirit upon all those in our midst who are endeavouring, freely receiving, freely to give. May they rejoice that they are permitted to work even in the humblest fields. May they rejoice in hardship; in doing things that are not pleasant; that are neglected by others; that require sacrifice of taste and of time.

O Lord our God, grant that every one of Thy dear children, who goes forth to make known the Lord Jesus Christ, may know Christ in the inner experience—the Christ who served not Himself; the Christ who gave and did not receive; the Christ who suffered that others might rejoice; the Christ who laid down His life that others might live; and may that mind be in them which was in Christ Jesus.

We pray that all our schools and missions, and the various spheres of labour into which Thy dear servants may be called, may be prospered, and that there may be great fruit coming from the sowing of much seed. And we pray not alone for our own Church or society, but for all the Churches around us—*all.* May the illumining Spirit of God be in every one. And may none labour in vain, sowing what they shall not see. May those that sow in tears come again, ere long, bringing sheaves in their bosom.

May Thy kingdom come throughout this land. We pray for the whole world. We pray for the nations that lie in darkness. We pray for those who are weak and trodden down; for the ignorant and for the superstitious. Oh for the day of manhood, for the emancipation of the soul, and for the uplifting of the spirit! Grant, O Lord, the consummation, the final and glorious day when all nations and tongues and people shall stand in liberty upon

justice and be loved of Thee, having learned to love one another, when the heaven and the earth shall be united, and when the glory of God shall fill them.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

a.

XIII

OUR Father, it is not in vain that we draw near to Thee, again and again, in trouble. We have come, and gone away enlightened. We have come bearing burdens, and Thou hast made them light by strength given to us. The thorn has been sharp which we have prayed against, that it might be removed, and Thou hast answered, "My grace is sufficient for thee." We rejoice that in sickness, in weakness, in trouble of every kind Thou hast approved Thyself a merciful Friend, full of compassion for our infirmities, very tender, and very forgiving even of our transgressions. Thou hast acted the part of wisdom in love, and of love in wisdom. We are selfish, we are inconsiderate, we are full of mistakes and errors of judgment and of the heart; and we stumble every day, and are altogether imperfect; and more than all else, we are imperfect in the gratitude which we render and in the love which we cherish toward Thee. Toward one another we are more honourable than we are toward Thee. We know the indifference with which we reap Thy great bounties. We know that even Thy mercies make us selfish and arrogant, and that we clamour for more and more, unconscious of benefit, and without thanksgiving, or a sense of Divine bounty. We pray for the forgiveness of this sordid selfishness, and of these unrequiting hearts of ours. We beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt reveal Thyself to us in such ways that our souls shall go out to Thee with perpetual thanksgiving;

that we may every day have a tenderer sense of God with us. Wilt Thou give us to feel that Thou art the Source and Fountain of all the mercies of our lives, and that Thou hast knit us to Thyself by Thy goodness, and not driven us away from Thee into selfishness?

We pray, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt forgive our sins of the past. We ask not alone that Thou wilt save us from the penalties which betide our transgressions, but that Thou wilt take away from us the love of wrong, and quicken in us a sense of that which is right and manly according to the pattern of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We pray that we may grow up into Him with a living consciousness of our relation to Him. May we be so drawn by Thy Spirit that we shall aspire to the things that belong to Him, and make them our own, and be joined to Him in heirship, not alone for inheritance of joy, but for likeness to Him, that He may be in us, and that we may be in Him—that we may be united to Him, as He is to God, in a blessed unity of love and purity.

We pray that Thy blessing may rest upon all who are in Thy presence here; upon those that need wisdom; upon those that need fortitude; upon those that need discrimination; upon those that need alleviation of care; upon those that need relief from remorse; upon those that need cure for heartache; upon those that are victims of fear; upon those to whom life itself looks like a perpetual storm. For all who in any way are tried and distressed, our prayers go up this evening, that Thou who art the minister of universal mercy wilt minister to each one as he needs—and especially that Thou wilt minister Thyself to each. Grant to all Thy presence, Thy blessing, Thine insight, and Thy care; and grant that men may learn patience, fidelity, and hope, by their faith in God.

We pray that Thou wilt prepare us for the duties of the week by the lessons and the inspiration of the Sabbath

day. Let it not be that we shall have finished our religion here, and that we shall take the Sabbath in the sanctuary as an equivalent of liberty to do as we please through the week. Rather may it be an incitement to us. May we have a clear vision of what is right. May we have a more sensitive conscience. Especially may the principle of honour be developed more and more powerfully in us. May we work for the things that are good. May we be more and more earnest to fulfil Thy will rather than our own, that we may walk in the ways of the Lord, growing stronger and broader as the time comes for our dismission from this life.

We pray that Thou wilt bless, not ourselves alone, but all members of this Church who are scattered abroad in Thy providence in various places—upon the sea, in foreign lands, everywhere. Wilt Thou bless those who remember us in love, and whom we remember in love. We commit them to Thy holy and Fatherly care and keeping.

We pray that Thou wilt bless the whole land in which we dwell—all its households and all its affairs in every way. Build up Thy cause and Thy kingdom among us, and among all the nations of the earth. Bring in Jew and Gentile; and at last let the Rising Sun come that shall stand a thousand years; and may glory and honour and peace, with purity, prevail throughout the world.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

a.

XIV.

O LORD our God, we rejoice in the manifestations of Thyself which are made in heaven, and on earth among men. We rejoice that with ripening knowledge Thou art growing more glorious in holiness, and more fearful in praise; and

that Thou dost fill the soul. Yet Thou art not known; and no man hath yet laid the line upon Thy being, or searched Thee out unto perfection: and Thou standest in light unapproachable. No man can measure Thee or define Thee. We can make mention of those things in Thee which are glorious, but none hath brought forth the treasure of Thy being, none hath given it proportion, and none hath made manifest what is the amplitude and wonder of glory, and goodness, and wisdom in Thee. Thou standest apart from all other things and beings, in Thine own individuality and personality, before the minds of men; for there is not that scope in us yet which can take Thee in—not even afar off. What are we that dance before Thee as motes in the sunbeam? What are we that are as a clod, or as the dust which springs from it?

We pray that we may have some such sense of the grandeur of Thy nature as shall cause us to hold ourselves without pride before Thee and with the docility of children; and that we may be more and more brought into Thy likeness.

Grant unto us, in the thought of Thy greatness and goodness, a refuge; for how little are we before the ages! How little are we before the manifestation of power in nature! How little in the currents of human life! How little is the utmost stretch of our power in the midst of those influences which draw us, and lift us up, or cast us down! And how much less are we before the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, and the Omnipresent! O Lord, may we feel, therefore, in our littleness and weakness, how good and gracious a thing it is that Thou art our Sun, our Shield, our Fortress, our Strength, our Leader, our Deliverer, the Author and the Finisher of our faith! May we take refuge in Thee. May we feel as children that run from outward danger homeward, and into the presence of their parents.

We pray, especially, that Thou wilt grant to Thy ser-

vants this morning, who have need of the overshadowing of God, that sensibility to Divine things by which they may avail themselves of that which is prepared, and which waits for their taking. May all those who are sick, or who have been, and are yet, weary with weakness, feel what God may be to them—how patient, how gentle, how wholesome, how healing. May all those who are in sorrow rise to the thought of the pity of the Divine nature—for sorrow is not to Thee what it must be to us, or Thou wouldst run often to us, as we do to our sorrowing children. Yet we know that many things that make them weep make us smile. We strive to harden them to bear things which are needful to their manhood: and dost Thou not look upon all the varied scenes of life, our Father, and see how many things are blessings which we moan as curses; and how many things are necessary disciplines which we avoid as if they were temptations, or overmastering disasters? If Thou dost smile when we sorrow, it is not because Thou carest not; but because Thou seest how good the blossom is which shall come out of the thorn-bearing bush of experience. Grant that we may rise into some such sense of Thy fidelity and of Thy mercifulness as shall enable us to look at our varied afflictions as Thou dost. And those who, in worldly circumstances, find themselves shaken out of their fortresses, whose foundations are suddenly sunken under them, and who are swept as the rolling down before the whirlwind—we pray that they may know what is the fulness and the sweetness of Thy command to lay up treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, where thieves do not break through, and where bankruptcies never come. And grant, since we have faith in the redemption of Jesus Christ, since we are all of us as shadows here seeking substance by-and-by, since we are strangers and pilgrims, and yet sons of God, unknown and uncrowned, but going toward our Father's house, since there are no treasures here that do not

perish in the using, and since there are endurable riches of righteousness in Thy kingdom waiting for us,—oh, grant that since these things are so we may not take our measures with our eyes looking downward. May we look at the stars and take our measures from thence. Like men who upon the deep look upward to learn wisdom by which to thrust their ships across the sea, may we look up into the heavenly places and draw down wisdom by which to guide ourselves in the infirmities and embarrassments and troubles of this mortal life. May we have a manhood that shall shake off trouble. Or, if we may not shake off trouble, may we have an endurance that can carry it. Or, if we may not have endurance to carry it, grant that we may have faith by which we can lay it upon Thee. For Thou carest for us. Teach us to be childlike, hearing Thee say, *I know all things, and all things shall work together for thy good.* Teach us to take Thee at Thy word; to rest in the Lord; to rest by day, and to rest by night. As the fowls of the sea, that sit singing in the night upon the tossing ocean, and are not afraid, knowing that in a moment they can mount upward and escape the toil and the wave-stroke; so may we be ever ready to lift ourselves above the darkness and the night, and into the air where the light dwells.

Teach us day by day, that we may teach others, humbling us, softening us, enriching us, and giving us the unconscious power of goodness, that we may not seek ourselves nor serve ourselves, nor be led away by our own violent zeal and intemperate ambitions, but that we may walk as the children of God in all humility and in all goodness one toward another, fulfilling the law of love.

We pray for Thy blessing to rest upon all the families of this congregation; upon each individual member; and upon all the children that are scattered away from their homes. Wherever they are, may they have the presence of God perpetually around about them, to guide them, to

guard them, and to keep them in integrity. We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to all those who need counsel, and to all that must give counsel; to all those that teach, and to all that are taught; to all those that labour in lowly ways and places, and to all that are raised on high and placed in authority; to all men in all conditions. Glorify Thyself by Thy people, and by the whole world, and make haste to bring in Jew and Gentile to one fellowship, to bring in all nations, and to make them one in Christ Jesus.

And to Thy Name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

a.

XV.

We render Thee thanks, our Heavenly Father, for that care and kindness of love which was vouchsafed to us from the morning of life; for the blessing of the house; for the blessing that came from father and mother, and from all the members of the household round about us in our early years. Long before we knew what it meant, we felt the power of Divine love, of faith, of true religion. So we were brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We thank Thee that from the opening of our intelligence we were instructed in things pertaining to our peace and to righteousness. And now we beseech of Thee, O God, that Thou wilt bless the effort which we make to give to our children that which we received so richly from our parents.

We pray this morning especially for those who have brought their children into the house of God among their brethren to dedicate them to the service of Christ, solemnly and publicly evincing their purpose to rear these children in Christian love and lore, and asking the sympathy and the help of their brethren in Christ Jesus in behalf of themselves and in behalf of their children; and with the

consent and voice and heart of this great congregation we beseech of Thee to pour blessings upon these dear children, and to grant that they may grow up in truth, in honour, in industry, in fidelity, in purity, in kindness, in faith, in the love of God, and in obedience thereto. And as each one of them has his battle to fight with the world, the flesh, and the devil, oh, teach each one to be a valiant soldier, Thou Captain of the salvation of every man; and grant that Thy servants may be armour-bearers in behalf of these little ones until they are able to contend for themselves. By their holy example, and by their assiduous endeavour, may they rear these children into Christlikeness. Prepare them for all that lies before them—for the great unexplored life without chart and without map. Grant, we pray Thee, that they may have Thee for their guide in the unknown before them; and may they grow up into Thy kingdom from the very morning of life.

Bless, we pray Thee, all the children that are in this Church and in this congregation. More and more turn the hearts of the parents toward their children, and the hearts of parents and children toward Thee. Sanctify every household, and all the events of joy or of sorrow which have befallen it. If bereavements afflict, if sorrows pierce, if losses oppress, still may there be an indwelling presence of the Saviour, who comes not to tarry for a night or for a meal, but to abide.

We pray that Thou wilt grant to every one who dwells in the households represented here that steadfast forelooking into the joy which is to come, into the certainty of life hereafter, into the full faith of a present God that shall enable us to bear still, as men in Christ Jesus, the whole dealing of Thy providence with us. Teach us all the meaning of the hidden, yet not obscure, declaration that we must become ourselves as little children, in simplicity, in ardent affection, and in clinging faith, if we would enter into the kingdom of

God. May we be ourselves cleansed from pride, envy, vanity, jealousy, anger, hatred, avarice, unkindness, and everything that shall tarnish the fair name of Jesus; and may we rejoice day by day to feel the spirit of Christ in ourselves. May we have before us the hope of Christ. May we hear by the inward ear the voice of the Saviour saying "This is the way: walk ye in it."

We beseech of Thee that this Church may be purified, strengthened, and made clear-minded and bold by the dealings of God with it. May it become more luminous, more energetic, more fruitful; and may the name of Christ, which is above every name, be exalted in our midst; and may the voice of the Gospel sounding here through the years go forth throughout all this land; and wherever it is heard, there may it bring faith; and may faith bring knowledge; and may knowledge bring stability, so that, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, all may be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

We pray for all the schools and missions that are under the care of this Church; for all the superintendents and officers; for all the teachers, and them that are taught. May the abiding presence of Thy Spirit testify to Thy favour and approbation; and may there be gathered day by day into the fellowship of this Church multitudes that shall be saved.

We pray that Thy blessing may rest upon all the Churches of this great city; and we beseech of Thee, as there shall come hither soon the messengers of Churches, as there shall be gathered here in a great assembly those that are set apart to do the will of God spiritually among men, thy blessing may come with them, and abide with them, in all their councils; and may there issue forth that spirit of fellowship and that fervour of faith and of love which shall give blessing to all the Churches and to all the households in which

they shall abide. We pray that Thou wilt bless all the Churches that may be represented, and all those that counsel for the welfare of mankind.

Bless all teachers, we beseech of Thee, that throughout this land knowledge may flow, and be as the light. We pray that Thou wilt bless all occupations, and those that labour in them. Let the whole welfare of this great people come up before Thee for blessing.

And we pray that Thou wilt join the nations of the earth in sympathy by those things which are noblest and best. Put down the ever-rising force of pride, of avarice, of greed, of power; and may nations dash against nations no more; and may war upon black wings fly away never to be heard of again; and may peace come with all sweetness, and all gentleness, and all growth of everything that is good. Let the fulfilment come at last for which the nations have waited, when Jesus shall take to Himself His great power to reign over all the world, and the new heaven and the new earth shall be joined together.

And to Thy Name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be everlasting praise. Amen.

a.

XVI.

BRING near unto us, our Father, that kingdom in which dwelleth righteousness—that kingdom where is no sin where are no errors, and where is no sorrow—the great invisible kingdom of God, in which peace dwelleth, into which we may not enter by the body, or by the eye, or by the ear, or by the hand, but which is within us and around us. We are the children of this kingdom, but are not yet old enough in soul-experience to understand the blessedness of sanctified thought and holy affection and inspired aspiration. We do not yet know the language of the soul,

or the meaning of its hidden sorrow, or all the surging of grief, or the trouble that is nameless within us. We are little children, though we walk as if we were grown men, and take to ourselves the pretence of knowledge. We think that we are strong because we are strong in the flesh, and as against the things that are visible and sensuous; but oh, how weak are we in the midst of griefs and under burdens! When there is a thorn in the flesh, what fever is there throughout! How are we continually crying as if we were lost! Whenever the waves lift themselves up, how do we run to Thee as if we feared that Thou wert asleep!

O Lord our God, we beseech Thee that Thou wilt interpret to us something of Thy blessed kingdom of thought and feeling, and of the Heart toward which we are coming; for time, and years, and the experience and battle of life, are, unconsciously to us, ministering to us, and preparing us for that kingdom. How much more blessed is it to know and be workers with Thee, with all Thine instruments, with our own intelligence, with our own apprehension, and with strong crying and tears, subduing fear, casting out doubt, patient in tribulation, instant in prayer, full of all goodness and gentleness and meekness, and not so much asking for more and for more, as wondering with thanksgiving why Thou art giving us so much, why Thy blessings to us are so numerous, and why they are so precious? And yet, Thy best blessings to us are as diamonds unground. We do not know what radiant light they have within them, which they may throw out. We are constantly treated by Thee in ways which should make us happy in having the treasure of the Lord. Still, over our very blessings we mourn, and we pray for their removal as if they were ministrations and messengers of trouble to us.

Oh for that better mankind! Oh for that Christlikeness, in power, in wisdom, in all goodness! Oh for that nature subdued to sweetness out of which is cast all bitter-

ness of selfishness, all vagrancy of pride, and in which are purity, and ripeness, and hope, and trust, and a calm which no storm can ruffle.

O Lord, if we are Thy disciples, why dost Thou press us so far from Thee? Nay, why are we refusing to draw near when Thou art saying, and for ever saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Lord, we are Thy ministers to-day to preach the truth of this gospel. It is in Thine heart to give rest to all Thy people. They that take the yoke and the burden willingly do find the one easy and the other light: and we are Thy witnesses to-day. Not only hast Thou power with God, but, Thou Prince of the soul, Thou Sovereign in all love—Thou hast power with men. Thou canst lift the dying into life again. Thou canst heal the broken-hearted. Thou canst open the prison-doors where men endungeoned by their passions have worn out their useless lives in groaning and in distress. Thou canst bring forth into life those that sit in darkness and in the very shadow of death. Thou art the Deliverer. Thou art the soul's Sovereign. Sweeter art Thou than honey in the honeycomb to the taste. More beautiful than all that is most beautiful in man's conception art Thou. Thou didst suffer Thy name to be tarnished among men. Thou wert overwhelmed by reproaches, and Thou didst bear them silently. Thou didst go down into death when Thou couldst have smitten with universal destruction Thine adversaries. Thou art standing girded with trouble; darkness is marshalled round about Thee as if all the princes of darkness had Thee in full dominion; and Thou standest silently. With omnipotence, with the sword, and with the mighty power of God on Thy side, Thou standest in Thy simplicity, and wilt not speak in Thine own defence. But never again shall night see Thee. Never again shall death touch Thee. Thou art ascended to the right hand of God,—ours, ours, for ever ours. To us Thou

art bending, and saying, in unforgetting love, *Come to Me.*

Now, O Jesus, Thou art the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. If Thy visage was once marred, it shines now as the morning star. If Thy look was sick unto death, it is full of gladness and peace now for all the tempest-tossed and the not comforted; and Thou hast no other thing to do but to take care of the poor, and the needy, and the sinning, and the downcast, and the captive. This is Thy work, in which Thou art rejoicing more than the mother ever rejoiced in nursing the child that she bore; and we beseech Thee that we may have such a sense of this wonder of God, of this wonder of Thy soul, that we shall dismiss all thoughts of men's government and of men's empire, and of all the sordid forces which belong to the outward life, and rise into a conception of Thy kingdom, where it is the soul that is sovereign, and where it is the Divine loving impulses that are the kings, and the priests, and the dominions, and the powers; and may we stand in all the royalty of the Divine nature, and feel what the promise to us is that we are to be the sons of God. Here we drag these bodies, often weak by sickness or by age; often in degrading and oppressive circumstances; often borne down by the haughty dominion of those that are above us; often overthrown and cast hither and thither by its troubles, as in a stormy sea a vessel is shipwrecked on a desolate island, with savages and venomous beasts; and yet, notwithstanding all our sorrows and trials, we are crowned men. For us is dominion, for us is empire, and for us is fellowship. We belong to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, and all the insignia of nobility are ours.

O Lord our God, we are ashamed of such weakness as we have found in ourselves. We are ashamed of our tears —except of gladness for the grandeur of Thy being, and of grief for our own ignobility. We are ashamed of the

outlook which we perpetually find ourselves giving to the face of things. If God be for us, what do we need more, by night and by day? Thou art our exceeding great reward.

And now we pray that every one of us may be able to lay aside the sin that so easily besets him, and all the troubles that are like clouds between him and the Sun of Righteousness; and that we may draw near to be sprinkled with the blood of atonement. Grant that we may draw near to Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of our faith, and look upon Him long, rejoicingly, and trustfully. So may we begin to go forth as the brightness of the firmament; to walk with conscious strength, and with joy and with peace. And may men hear our songs in the night, and rejoice in the light, however feeble, that twinkles from our casements; so that, lost in the wilderness, and guided by the shining light, they may be drawn through us to succour and to safety.

Bless all those who are labouring in word and doctrine, and those who are attempting to be their companions in toil, and in the work of the Gospel. Multiply those that are brought forth from darkness to light. We pray especially that Thou wilt pour Thy Spirit upon Thy ministering servants in all the Churches, and make the Word of God powerful in their hands.

Let Thy blessing rest upon Thy servants who are providentially with us for a few weeks. May they be more and more inspired with the love of Christ, that out of that Divine love may spring more and more of patient sympathy with men; and may they have wisdom to guide them in all their perplexities. *a.*

XVII.

EVERLASTING thanks be unto Thee, Thou blessed God and Father of all, for that estate in which Thou dost dwell, and toward which Thou art guiding us. How ignorant we are

before Thee!—more ignorant than little children when they are led by the father's hand. In the greatness of the way; in the entanglements of the thicket; in the hardness of the path; in the conflicts among men, and in their jealousies; in overthrow; in despondency; in doubts, we come, perplexed, and at times are ready to cast down the aim and the hope of immortality; but, blessed be Thy name, thou art still the God of all brightness, though clouds do brood the earth. Behind them, and beyond their power, is the eternal calm and the everlasting sunshine of their eternal love. And we are not shut out from Thy beauty because of weakness; we are not alone because we are lonesome; we are not feeble and fit for nothing because we seem to ourselves so; for our life is in Thee. We are less than the babe, but Thou art more than the mother; and cradled in Thine arms, borne in the bosom of Thy providence, we are safe, though we seem not to be so, and run, hurrying, with our prayers to Thee when Thou seemest to sleep upon the ship, terrified at the storm, doubting the power of Thy word to bring the calm, and are rebuked at the bright shining again of Thy providence and of Thine own self into our souls.

When shall we learn to trust? O Lord our God, when shall our faith be tranquil? When shall we cease to be beaten about by the force of reason, searching and inquiring and attempting to clasp the orb of Thy being, or to measure Thy government by our knowledge, depending for our joy upon what we know? We who are the children of darkness—when shall we have the constancy, the truth of love? When shall we be able to take good and evil, darkness and light, with the revolving days and seasons, and call them all good?

Draw us, we beseech Thee, near to Thyself. Behold the weakness of our best things. We strive to fly, and only flutter. We seek some sight of the great heaven above

us, and are caught in the thicket and the forest. We get glimpses, but have no free, unobstructed view. And though we are heirs of life and power, we need Thine infinite compassion and Thy help.

This morning, O Lord, we would look upon all good things as Thine, and as inspired by Thee. As fruit is drawn forth from the earth by the sun, so from Thee all our good and excellent things come, Thou great Husbandman, tilling the soil, though it be poor, in us, that we may bring forth the sweet and pleasant plants of righteousness.

We beseech Thee to draw into Thy presence this morning all Thy dear servants who are unconscious of their need, and, still more, those who are weary from being overburdened, and who look round about them in vain for succour and for strength. May they remember that Thou faintest not, neither art weary, and that Thou hast told them to cast their burdens on Thee. Thou that dost govern throughout the mighty realm of the universe, bearing it easily toward eternal sweetness and calmness and joy, our burdens, pressing Thee, are as the mist that before our eyes goes into nothing again. So grant that we may help ourselves by casting our cares upon Him who careth for us. Not as they who are, like ourselves, encumbered with the flesh, art Thou, standing in eternal youth, unwasting, never slumbering nor sleeping, nor needing to renew Thy power, since the centre of all power is in Thee. We do cast our care upon Thee; but let us not ask it back again. So keep our souls, we beseech Thee, that they may reflect Thee evermore, and that we may not go mourning in darkness as they who have lost their God and themselves.

We pray that Thou wilt behold those upon whom Thy hand has been laid heavily, and whose strength is overborne, and who, pressed toward the earth, see but the clod. Lift up their heads, that they may look to Thee in their trouble; and if their trouble crushes them, may it be as the

crushing of seed into the earth, which shall only make it to sprout and bring forth flowers and fruit.

We beseech Thee, be in all those places where Thou hast struck within, and where every chord of the heart vibrates harshly. Whom Thou lovest Thou chastenest; and if Thou art attuning the heart, if Thou art straining all the chords, that they may be more harmonious, teach them what is the work that is going on in them. For the present it is not joyous, but grievous; but may they learn to hope, in that afterward it shall bring forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Be gentle, we pray Thee, with those who are ready to perish. Thou who dost not strive nor cry, Thou whose voice is not heard in the street, Thou before whom the bruised reed shall not fall broken, Thou that wilt not quench the smoking flax till Thou dost bring forth judgment unto victory, have compassion upon the poor and needy. Have compassion upon all those who are discouraged, and upon all those who need the presence and the inspiration of God, and know not how to find it. Shine down upon their darkness, and quicken them by Thine own mighty power, that they may rise up with the infinite treasure of faith—with the consciousness of God present with them—saying, whatever there may be in life, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Oh, what forces are ranged about Thy servants! What angelic messengers! What principalities! What dignities! What currents of law! What purposes and wills and decrees of Thine own! How do the seasons fight for men! How do the stars fight against evil! How are all Thine armies arrayed that they may bring forth judgment unto victory! And we are on Thy side, and for us are all these. For us is the herald of the life that is to come. For us are blown already from out the celestial seat, the sweet-sounding trumpets. They who have walked, as we walk, in

tears, yea, and in blood, and who have gone to the end, and have been crowned with victory—do they not turn to us with outcry, saying, "Come; whosoever will, let him come?" To the poorest, to the meanest, to the most forsaken, to the wickedest, comes to-day the sweet invitation from the lips of those who have been purified from sin, and made victorious over temptation. And, O God, we behold among them our father, our mother, our brother, our sister, our companions of toil and trouble. The loved of our very soul, gone from us here, are in heaven; and they come to us to-day. We behold them. We rejoice in their victory. And we are coming. Soon we shall join them in the blessedness of that eternal rest.

Vouchsafe to us, then, something of Thine inspiration, that we may carry our load more patiently, that we may be more gentle and helpful one to another; that we may know how to cast a heavenly light upon earthly treasure, and to take from worldly troubles all gloom, and see in them the gold that is there. And we beseech Thee not only that we may walk in Thy presence with joy, but that in the sound of our joyfulness other men who are discouraged and alienated may be brought to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Bless, we pray Thee, all of this great congregation, and each one severally. May every one feel that God knows him by name, and in his every individual interest, and is merciful toward him. May none be unwilling to seek the needed favour, and to lean upon that staff which Thou dost proffer.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt bless the labours of this Church. Bless our schools and missions, and all that go forth bearing succour and consolation to the needy. May those that water find themselves abundantly watered; and those that scatter the seed of truth—may their souls be as a garden.

We pray that Thou wilt bless the Churches, thy servants, all that are labouring in word or doctrine everywhere. Take away all the alienations, all the divisions, all the jealousies, and all the carnal separations that stand between Christian and Christian. May there be in their hearts more and more of the overflowing spirit of God, that they may come together even as the waters of the sea.

And we pray that Thou wilt bless the special labours in which Thy servants are at this time engaged, and those who preach the Gospel in our midst. We ask Thy blessing especially upon those services which have been begun this day. May the very spirit of the Sabbath rest upon them. May the joy of God be in Thy servants' hearts. May they both speak and sing triumphantly, as they should whom Christ has crowned. More and more may the unsearchable riches of Christ be their theme and their rejoicing. May the poor and the outcast, and the vicious, and the child of crime, and the ignorant, and the desponding, and those for whose souls no man cares, be found and brought back to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. May men everywhere, of every kind, whatever may be their knowledge or their estate, receive some blessing from this Divine impulse; and may the light and the truth come forth as a lamp which burneth; and all over the earth may Thy cause go forward, Thy kingdom be advanced, and Thy Name be glorified.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

a.

XVIII.

WE offer our thanksgiving, our Heavenly Father, for Thy benignity, for Thy patience, for Thy gentleness with us; with the long life of imperfection which stretches through our memory; with the provocations which we have given, and give continually; with our dull sense of things fine

and noble; with the strength of our passion towards things coarse and earthly. When we survey all that we are, and what our life has been, we marvel that Thou, in Thy high estate of purity, canst look with complacency upon us, that Thy heart has gone out after us, and that Thou hast made Thyself a sacrifice for us, the just for the unjust. The opening of Thy nature is full of marvel. There is nothing in us that is like unto Thee. We are filled with wonder when we stand upon the threshold of the being exalted so far above infirmity, infinite, of a nature so much beyond ours. From the very best things in ourselves we only discern the beginning of those infinite and eternal attributes in Thee which have filled time and the universe with Thy goodness and Thy mercy.

O Lord our God, we desire to humble ourselves in Thy presence. We desire to efface our sinfulness and our distance from Thee. We recognise our unlikeness to Thee, our barrenness of good, and our fruitfulness of evil; and we desire, O Lord our God, to ask for that quickening grace which shall fall upon desert hearts like ours, and make them blossom as the rose. May we have to-night the influence of the Divine Spirit to quicken all in us that is good, and to give growth to the seed of grace, that we may behold Thee more perfectly by growing like Thee.

Grant Thy blessing to go with us into our houses, that they may be Churches of the living God. May every one to whom Thou hast given the joy and the responsibility of the family relation feel himself ordained of God as a minister of righteousness; and may the gate of heaven to every one of us be within our own dwelling.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt cause Thy blessing to rest upon all those who are in bondage of sin, and who yet live in the midst of Christian influences, and are conducting the affairs of life day by day. Grant that they may be purged of selfishness; and that they may be de-

livered from the power of the natural man and of the flesh; that they may live by the inspiration of Thy Spirit; that they may be in fellowship with Thee.

We pray that the truth may arouse those who are slumbering, and convince those who are unbelieving, and enrich those who are poor. We pray that Thou wilt grant that the Gospel as proclaimed from Sabbath to Sabbath in the midst of this congregation may be growingly fruitful, comforting those that are in despondency and in sorrow, strengthening those that are ready to perish from weakness, rebuking those that are lukewarm, and inciting all to the higher and nobler disclosure of Christ in us the hope of glory.

We entreat Thee to bless all the labours of this Church everywhere—in its missions, in its distribution of charities, and in its seeking and searching for those who are needy. Grant that all who make known the truth may be themselves the children of light. May they who preach Thy Word have in their own souls the Spirit of that Saviour whom they represent. We pray that Thou wilt multiply the number of those who are turned from death to life. Grant that we may hear the voice of men inquiring more earnestly after the way of Christ, and that we may behold the lives of Thy servants more and more perfectly subdued to the law of Jesus.

Bless all the Churches round about us. Bless all the efforts that are being made in these great cities for the furtherance of Thy cause. Wilt Thou sanctify all the institutions of our land that are established for the promotion of intelligence. Bless all teachers and preachers of the Gospel, and all men that seek the reformation of morals in their times and circumstances. We pray that God may come in all this land, and throughout the world. May wars cease, and the occasions of them. May ignorance be dissipated, and knowledge come in its place. May all those

great and precious promises, so long delayed and so surely coming, make haste toward their fulfilment, until all the earth shall become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be the praise for evermore. Amen.

a.

XIX.

WE thank Thee, our Father, for the mercies that are strown around about us, more than we know, more than we pause to recognise. Every day furrows under ten thousand unperceived kindnesses; and the things which do not happen, as well as the things that come to pass, are filled with Divine caution and care in our behalf. For the heaven and for the earth, for the procession of time, for men, for events, for the movement of nations, and for all that Thou art doing for mankind, we thank Thee. Thou art in all things overruling; and the line of Thy thought is the line of march of the universe. Although to us, in the clash and din and bewilderment, things seem to have broken loose and to fly wandering hither and thither, there is nothing that doth not feel the force of Thy law, and that is not guided by Thine hand; and all things shall work together for good to them that love Thee.

Make us patient, then, in the working out of Thy counsels. When we look back upon our life we perceive how sometimes the night was better to us than the day. We remember that our tears were foolish, and that our fears were phantoms. We remember how many things we sought to avoid whose coming was as a gift of God. We remember how many times, when the yoke was upon us, and we dreaded it, it became an easy yoke, and a yoke in which lay our strength. We remember how many times we sought to overleap barriers and to choose paths for our-

selves, and murmured at the restraint which hedged us in; and yet, looking back, we see that the wisdom of Thine overruling providence and Thy counsels, for us, have been full of light. And all the way of life, as we look back upon it, begins to reflect, even from the dark facets, the light of the goodness of God to us. Since thou hast been faithful hitherto, we pray that we may learn in trouble still to lift ourselves above it and trust in Thee. We pray that we may not feel with every storm which comes that it is the last of singing, and that all things shall be overturned. May we imitate the birds that nestle in the tree until the voice of God in thunder has passed, and the sun comes back, and then sing again. Not only may we learn from the birds of the air, but may we learn from the flowers of the field, that they, though they are beaten down, and seem utterly overborne by the storm, lift themselves when the rain ceases, and are fresher and fuller of sap than ever. We pray that thus we may put our trust in God, walking in His sight, seeing Him who is invisible. Surrounded by the consciousness of His presence and power, may we be able to say, If He be for us, who can be against us?

We pray especially for every one of those who are in Thy presence in every one of their relations. We pray that their voice of thanksgiving and their offerings of gratitude this morning may be acceptable before Thee. We thank Thee for so many as bring good cheer and hope into Thy presence. We pray for those who are in the shadow, and upon whom the night yet rests. We pray that they may behold the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. We pray for those who are in perplexity and doubt, that they may be brought out into that light wherewith Thou lightest the world. We pray that Thou wilt grant unto all those who are in the midst of life's battles and temptations that they may carry themselves as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to be with us in all our social relationships. Clarify our affections. May they lift themselves up upon the background of the heavenly world. May we learn to have less selfishness, and to have more aptitude for bearing one another's burdens. May we learn to seek, not the pleasure, but the benefit of those whom we love. Grant, we pray Thee, that thus we may walk together in heavenly companies as Churches and households, with Thee as an ever-abiding Guest, sanctifying, cheering, strengthening, and comforting us every day.

And now we pray for all Churches, and for all Thy ministering servants of every name. We pray for more peace and sympathy and growing unity among Thy people. We pray for Thy cause under every form throughout all society. May the years ripen. May we see at last the time of ingathering when God shall send forth His angels to reap, and all shall be garnered in heaven.

We beseech of Thee, O God, that Thy kingdom may come, and that Thy will may be done, upon earth as it is in heaven.

We offer these petitions, not because we are worthy, but in the adorable Name of the Beloved, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. Amen.

a.

XX.

THOU hast found us, and not we Thee, Thou all-searching God. Thine eye carries light. There is no rolling season to Thee: nor to Thee is there day or night. There is in the land where Thou dwellest no need of the sun, nor of the moon, nor of the stars. There is no night there. Thou art the light of the heavenly realm, and Thou art the life, and the reason of life, throughout that realm. Though Thou art hiding Thyself by excess of light, and though we discern

Thee dimly, and at times our whole sight is covered with a cloud, yet we rejoice to believe that Thou art, and that Thou art the Rewarder of those that diligently seek thee. We rejoice to believe that our cries which bring no answer are not unheeded; and that though nothing seizes our hands when we stretch them out to Thee in our extremity, they take hold upon Thy heart's compassion. Thou dwellest so far from our mortal sight, in nature, we think that Thou art afar off as we measure distance; and yet Thou art near at hand. An infant's sigh Thou hearest. The smallest cry of expiring weakness is louder in Thine ear than the thunder is in ours. The things which are most dark have no darkness to Thee. The things that are most remote are within Thine easy touch. The things that are most difficult are not hard to Thee. With Thee all things are possible. We rejoice that Thou art such an one. We rejoice that Thou art so great beyond anything we know, and that Thou art incomprehensible. We build up in ourselves some thought of Thee by taking that which is the best among the best; and we draw great comfort from the conceptions which we have of Thee. At times we are abashed, and at times we regard with fear and trembling the imagery of our own imagination concerning Thee; but we cannot dispute, nor do we desire to doubt, the testimony of the witness that is in ourselves, nor of the supremest moments when we are furthest from the flesh, and when in the conception of the Spirit Thou art most certainly ours. We are nearest to Thee when we are best, when we are highest, when we are purest, when we are most purged and cleansed from that which is of the earth, earthy. And we rejoice that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what Thou art who art so rich and so transcendent. Though we help ourselves, blessed be Thy Name, by all the images which we gather from this world, yet the reality will so transcend these that it will be like the breaking in of the sun with its glory upon the tapers

which we light in our darkness. When we see Thee as Thou art, the earth will have gone, and our memory will stagger, and the poverty of our world-thoughts will fill us as with the shame of rags. When Thou standest apparent in the grandeur of Thy whole being and we know somewhat of Thy circumference; when we are translated into the Spirit life, and our souls draw near to Thee, and we behold Thee as Thou art, how poor will seem our doubts! How dismal will appear to us that infirmity which we now call reason! All things shall have passed away—prophecy, and knowledge, and teaching, and things taught; but there shall abide hope and love. The new life of the disposition, the lordliness of the heart towering above time—death shall not touch it, nor shall darkness belt it. It shall stand before God, recognising Him and rejoicing in Him.

And now, we pray Thee, instead of striving more and more for doctrines and for registered thoughts, may we strive more and more for the likeness of God in ourselves. Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God. May we seek that purity in love, in gentleness, in meekness, in humility, in self-denial, in all honour and generosity and truth; and in all nobility of soul may we seek to be like Thee in disposition. Death shall have no dominion over the heart. Though we wander and stagger hither and thither in our thought and in our feelings, grant, we pray Thee, that the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ may be in us, and that we may be in Him. Grant that we may have the hope and the love by which we shall meet darkness, and trouble, and burdens, and captivity, and overthrow, and death itself, and by which, dying, we may slay death for ever.

Grant, we pray Thee, to every one in Thy presence the manifestation of this truth to-day. Bring Thyself very near to every heart; and bring every heart very near to Thee. Remember how helpless we are. Remember that we are sinful; and that if we rise above this terrene, Thou must lift

us. O Lord, be as wings to every one of us, and bear us above these sublunary scenes, that this may be to us a day of soul-rest—heavenly rest.

Wilt Thou lift the light of Thy countenance upon any who specially need Thy presence? Are there not some the bitterness of whose cup is more than they can bear? Remember Thine own anguish when Thy cup was so bitter. Yet, as Thou didst in resignation drink it, so teach them that they can bear it—if not in themselves, yet in Him who loved them. If there are those whose burdens, growing more irksome and heavier day by day, will not give them rest, may they hear Thee saying, in the silence of their thought, Come unto Me; I will give you rest. If there are those who are wandering in doubt and fear and unbelief Thou canst call them, as Thou didst Mary of old, by their name; and while they stand before Thee not knowing who Thou art, Thou canst strike through them the joyful conviction that Thou art their Saviour. We beseech Thee, if there are any who sit in great sorrow of the past, that Thou wilt turn their eyes from looking outward and backward, that they may look forward and behold that which is above. All our life moves away from things done toward other higher and nobler things to be done; and we pray that Thou wilt rebuke Thy servants, in great love, that dwell in sorrow, and that extract bitterness from things gone by. If Thou didst wear the piercing thorns for Thy crown, and didst not feel dishonoured, and didst go, not wearied nor overborne by suffering, how much more shall we that are but disciples and followers bear the slight woundings of any thorns that pierce us. Rebuke us by Thine example, and make us strong in weakness, and steadfast in weariness, and light in darkness, and joyful in sorrow, that we may come with Thy servant of old to rejoice in infirmities because Thy grace abounds in us.

We pray that Thou wilt accept our thanks for those who

are gone; for all that are at rest; for all that are at home, and feel no more of winter wind, that are no more scorched by the summer's sun, and upon whom hath been lifted the sanctifying light of the heavenly sphere. Heaven is full of our companions. Unforgetting they think of us to-day, and would call out of the crowd to us with voices strangely sweet if we could hear them, Come, come. The voice of the Spirit and the voice of the Bride say to every one, Come. May all of us, weary and heavy laden, listen, and press forward to enter into that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

O Lord, bless us, not according to our desert, but according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies and of Thy loving-kindnesses. And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

XXI.

GRANT unto us, our Heavenly Father, in this hour of rejoicing, of light and of peace, such a sense of Thy paternity, such a sense of Thy government of love and mercy, as shall make us rejoice together in a fellowship of joy. May this be a household of peace and of gladness. In the midst of a world full of tumult, may there be calm here. With darkness striving with light, and checkering the world with twilight, let Thy face evermore shine in the midst of this congregation. Amidst strifes of selfishness, of pride, of envy, and of jealousy; amidst cares and troubles in the outside world, here may we have rest. May we find here that peace which passeth all understanding.

Now we commend to Thee those who are gathered into our membership this morning. We pray for them. We ask not that they may have visions, or the spirit of prophecy, or various and attractive gifts, but that they may have faith and love. Grant that these may abound in them.

Grant that they may by faith discern the invisible realm around them, and by love have perfect harmony within. Give to them steadfastness. May they measure themselves, not by months. May they, to the depths of their experience, be conscious of their fallibility, of their weakness, and of their need of the Divine protection; and may they have an assured faith that He who hath called them in love will never leave them nor forsake them; that darkness is not departure; that it is but the hiding for a moment of His face, which may be restored again with great glory. We pray that the hidden life may be theirs—a life by which their souls shall be in communion with God, and with those who have departed. May they be in communion with the saints, not only here upon the earth, but in the heavenly host.

We rejoice, O Lord, in believing that we are not in a desert, separated from the march of Thy great army. The Church above and the Church below are one; and we are victorious in the victory of those who are translated. Nor have they forgotten us because they are lifted into the land of the blest. They look down more in number than the stars of the night; and we are theirs that await us. They minister to us—invisible ranks among those that wait on the Lord. And we beseech Thee that we may have great joy in this communion of the saints. Sending our aspirations and our desires and our longings upward, may we receive the dews of heaven that shall cool the fever of the soul, and allay its anxieties and its cares.

We pray that every one in Thy presence this morning may have such ministration as is best for him in the special relations and conditions in which Thou hast placed him. Enter every heart, to do for it what it needs. O Thou great Physician! Thou knowest where the trouble is; what the sorrow is, what the burden is, and what the care is; and wilt Thou deal with each one according to his necessities

We rejoice that Thou knowest Thy sheep by their very names. None is before Thee with whom Thou art not perfectly acquainted ; and we pray that Thou wilt minister to each that which his circumstances require.

We pray that Thou wilt be gracious to every household. Thou knowest what are the trials that surround each family. Thou knowest where are the sources of grief and anxiety. Thou knowest what are the well-springs of joy, and whether they are open or clogged. We pray that Thou wilt dwell in each household that is here represented, and say to every one, not alone in the evening, but morning and evening, "Peace and joy be with you."

Grant Thy blessing upon all Thy servants in the various avocations of life. As they go forth everywhere may they go as Christ's men ; and may they have His truth, His honour, His purity, His unworldliness. Grant that every one may have, as Christ had, the love of men ; and may he mingle among his kind, bearing about with him evermore sweetness, and gentleness, and light, and instruction.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon the labours of this Church. Bless all its schools and missions. Bless all the ways in which men seek to feed and serve their fellow-men. We pray that Thou wilt help those that teach, those that preach, those that carry consolations to such as are in trouble, and those that minister to the sick and needy. And may the blessing of the Almighty be with all that carry forth the beneficence of God to their fellows.

We pray for all the Churches of this city, and for all the pastors ministering in them, that they may be filled with the Holy Ghost. Cleanse them from everything that is evil, and establish them in all that is good. Bless our whole land. Make it Emmanuel's land, a mountain of holiness, a habitation of righteousness.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen. *a.*

XXII.

WE thank Thee, our Father, that Thou hast thrown wide open the door of opportunity; that Thou hast not waited for us to make known our darkness and our trouble, but hast sent forth the Spirit of intercession and of love. Before we see for ourselves Thou makest intercession, O blessed Saviour. Before we know that we are dead Thou sendest to arouse us, and dost bring us forth by Thine own influence into life. And we draw near to Thee, not as if we were more anxious for ourselves than Thou art for us; not as if we desired spiritual gifts more than Thou dost desire that we should have them: we draw near to Thee in body because Thy Spirit is upon us. We desire to know more of Thee, more of Thy way, more of Thy power to subdue sin and selfishness and every evil thing that is within us. And we ask to-night for the presence of God, that all our souls may feel the Divine influence; that whatever is evil may be repressed; that whatever is good may be made better and stronger; that our affections may be Divinely influenced; that our understandings may be glorified; that our judgments may be established upon the truth; that all our aspirations may be rightly directed. Inspire every soul in Thy presence with a sense of its need of Thee, of its own helplessness, of the magnitude and variety of its wants; and inspire every one with an earnest desire to seek for Thee and to find Thee, Thou that art not far from any. And we pray that Thy presence this evening may not bring dread; may it bring only filial fear, salutary, helpful, inspiring. We pray that we may be led up along the way that shall bring us to Thee with all the love and home-feeling that children have toward earthly parents, yet nobler, purer, more exalted; that we may be bound to Thee by a fealty that nothing can disturb. May we treat Thee with honour, and manifest toward Thee all the most gracious

affections of our souls. May there be that sense of Thine infinite desert, of Thine everlasting riches, of Thy goodness and glory, and of our poverty and need and obligation, which shall make us evermore intense in faith, in hope, in trust, in love, and in zeal of obedience.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt accept our thanks for all the experience which we have had of Thee in days past; for the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and for its cleansing and illuminating power. We pray, O God, that Thou wilt accept our thanks for the ministrations of mercy which have attended us from our childhood in the scenes through which we have gone. For sorrows, for bereavements, for troubles of every kind, accept our thanks. For joy; for all things that have made life full of brightness and gladness; for friends and friendships; for occupations; for the privilege of labouring in Thy vineyard; for all our affiliations one with another, we render Thee thanks. And we beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt make that which is rich yet richer. We pray that Thou wilt make our life to consist not in the abundance of the things which we possess. Grant that we may behold Thee, Thy wealth in the heavens, Thy brightness in all the earth, Thy mercy in daily providence, Thy ministration in the secrecy of Thine own thought and feeling; and may we come to feel that in Thee we are strong, that in Thee we live, that in Thee we move, and that in Thee we have our being, with all that lives beneath us in the animal life; and that only then are we men when we are in Thee. We pray that thus we may be drawn into Thy sacred likeness, into the new life, into higher and nobler aspirations, and that we may continue therein unto the end, overcoming and sitting down triumphantly in Thy presence.

We pray especially that Thou wilt draw near this night to those who have come up hither with some trouble, with some sorrow, with some burden, with cares, with sighs, with

tears. Wilt Thou be gracious to each of them severally as Thou seest that they need. Give patience to those who are tried in over-measure. Give courage to those who fear that they shall fall. May they remember that the angels of God are encamped round about His servants, and that no weapon formed against Thine own shall in the end prosper.

Are there those who are bowed down with very heavy burdens? Still may they be strengthened to bear to the end, if this is Thy pleasure. While we pursue our duties in life, and with enterprise continually labour for things right, may we evermore say, Thy will be done; and may we discern what Thy will is by the evolution of Thy providence. So we pray that every one of us may walk, day by day, with growing hope; and as the songs of departure shall multiply, grant, we pray Thee, that we may look into the future with joy; since for us the summer lapses, not into winter, but into eternal spring. May we rejoice in the thought of our own departure and of our coming glory with Jesus Christ, and conquer fear, and throw off despondency, and march from this life into the life above as men come forth from prisons into liberty and light. And so may we appear in Zion and before God.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

a.

XXIII.

OPEN Thou, O Lord our God, our understanding, and quicken our hearts, that we may discern and mention all those benefits for which we are this day called to give thanks. For this day, and for the brightness thereof, and for all that it brings to the memory, we render Thee thanksgiving. We thank Thee that Thou hast taught us to associate Thy reverend Name with day and with night, with the

revolving seasons, with seed-time and harvest; so that all the earth is Thy Bible, and all the varied experiences that are taking place under the guidance of Thy laws are revelations of Thy will, as well as of Thy power and of Thy wisdom.

We rejoice that thus we are not separated from Thee; and though we do not understand the unknown and invisible face of Jehovah, yet day by day we meet Thee, and speak with Thee, and are spoken unto, and ministered unto, by Thy servants which are the laws that run to and fro fulfilling Thy behests.

We thank Thee for all the year; for its abundant harvests; and for its exemption from widespread, wasting sicknesses. We thank Thee for all the mercies of the field and of the store; for all the mercies of home; for all the mercies in the town, in the city, and in the whole great land; for all the restraining mercies by which we have been saved from intestine commotion and violent eruption; for all thy positive favours by which justice has been administered, and by which prosperity has been increased in our land.

We thank Thee especially that Thou art teaching us how to take trouble as a benefit, and how to cure self-indulgence by industry, and how, more and more, to thrive by restraint. We rejoice that Thou dost prune, as well as dig about and enrich; and that Thou dost reach forth Thy timely hand, and cut back the extravagance of men, and teach them the limits of their power; and with moderation and forbearance dost educate them to better citizenship, to better self-government, and for a better preparation of the Gospel itself in their own souls.

We thank Thee especially, too, that Thou hast made this a year of enterprise in things intellectual, in things social, and in religious life; and that Thou art answering the desire which has been steadily increasing and coming up from all Thy people, for the reviving of Thy work; and that Thou

art, to an unusual extent, calling men to the thought, not alone of the best things for the life that now is, but also of the best estate for that life which is to come.

We thank Thee for that large degree of kindness and favour with which Thou hast inspired the whole community; and that whereas, in times gone by, the coming of Thy kingdom in power hath brought forth violent opposition and wrath, Thou art binding the wrath of men, and art preventing the enkindling of their passions, and leading them with kindness to look upon the things that they have despised.

And now we pray that Thou wilt be pleased to guide and govern all those influences that are unfolding this people. We pray especially that Thou wilt infuse a spirit of kindness and confidence into the hearts of all the citizens of this great nation. We thank Thee that we have been preserved from war. We thank Thee that we have been brought through strait and difficult ways back again to concord; and we pray that the outward and visible harmony which has returned may grow and develop, and that there may be no more prejudice, and no more misunderstandings through ignorance. Grant that the law of violence may be unknown henceforth through all our land. Build up, therefore, all those interests which are common to men, all those interests which are reciprocal, and which teach men how much they depend upon each other.

We pray that Thou wilt favour all wholesome enterprises. and encourage all efforts for the upbuilding of wise institutions; all efforts for the cleansing of morals; all efforts for the purging of laws and governments; all efforts for bringing back wise judges and magistrates who shall be faithful to their public trusts; all efforts for the beautification of this great land. Inspire in the hearts of this great people a love for their homes, for their institutions, and for this land of their birth or of their adoption. We pray that Thou

wilt cause this vast commonwealth to grow in all truth and honour and fidelity; in all industry and prosperity therein; in all true statesmanship and kindliness therein; in all duty toward those round about them, or in their midst, who are weak and ready to perish. We pray that this nation may stand, not with gauntleted hands, defying other nations, but with open palm bearing blessings to them. Grant that the day may speedily come when nations, recognising their common relations, shall help each other.

Oh for the days of generosity among nations! Oh for the days of truth instead of craft! Oh for the days of fellowship instead of conflict! We believe they will come. Advance, in Thine own way, and in Thine own time, that blessed day of prediction, when all the earth shall be filled with the Spirit of God; when righteousness shall be the stability of the times; when peace, with intelligence and justice, shall rule the world.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

XXIV.

MAKE us to feel, our Father, that our life consists not in the present, nor in the things which our hands can handle. May we feel within ourselves the meaning of the other kingdom. May we feel that it is not that which stays when we depart, but that which goes with us, that is of value. May we look into our hearts to know how much is there of the kingdom of God, of righteousness, of love, of joy, of fellowship in the Holy Ghost. And when we look, how slender is the treasure! How little of heaven abides with us! How have we been wont to put away heavenly thought, as if that were something to come afterward when life is over! How little have we felt that the kingdom of God is within us!

And now we draw near to Thee, conscious of our want;

conscious of the failures which have accompanied every day of our lives, with various degrees of knowledge and of carefulness. We have stumbled, even in the plainest things. We have done wrong and gone wrong, to find ourselves yet more under the dominion of the flesh than the spirit. We have missed Thee, in that we have been turmoiled; in that we have had no peace; in that we have felt the sharp domination of pride and of selfishness; in that we have been discontented without reason. We have felt Thine absence, and have not known what ailed us. We have felt poor, and have not known how to gain riches; or, knowing, have neglected our knowledge; and this morning we make confession to Thee of the poverty that is in us. Would it were poverty of spirit, with Thy blessing thereon! Would that it were a more perfect consciousness of that which we lack. For we are puffed up. We are strong. We think ourselves to be wise. We often comfort ourselves with thoughts of our goodness, which is as the early cloud or the morning dew. In Thine eyes we are most slenderly apparelled. We are without provision. We are poor indeed. Have compassion upon us, Thou that art from eternity a God of infinite mercy, Help us in our struggle—for we do strive. Help us to understand—not from the outward understanding alone, but by the ministration of Thy Spirit in our spirits.

Grant, O Lord, that there may be that forming power moving upon the deep chaos of our souls which shall bring forth light and life. We pray that every one of us, this day, may be taught of God. Not forsaking the way of life, nor the experience of good men gathered up from the days of old, may we long for, and know how to possess, that knowledge which shall teach us to walk in the new and living way, and to live by faith and not by sight.

We pray that Thou wilt help all those who are discouraged. How many there are who have made war against themselves! And yet for years the Hivites and the Hittites have

had possession of the hills; nor can the people drive them therefrom. Have compassion upon those who are willing, as they think, but who strive without fruit or profit. Have compassion upon those who go all the day long with uneasiness and a self-condemning conscience, and who know that they desire above everything else to please God. Have compassion upon all those who are found in the presence of over-mastering temptations that come upon them as the sun in the summer, and beat them down small and languid, so that they cannot resist. Have compassion upon those who have been so misled and overcome and entangled that they are in bondage to pride, and to selfishness, and to avarice, and to all forms of iniquitous worldliness. Have compassion upon those who are changeable; who know not how with resolution to hold the mind; whose purposes change with the changing winds. Have compassion upon all, Thou that art the greatest and the most concerned for the lowest and the least. Oh, how great is Thy flock, if we think of all the things that live in the air, or in the sea, or in the ground. and that look to Thee for a provision for their life! If Thou dost think upon the infinite brood that man despises or treads unseen under foot, and art caring for them, how much more dost Thou regard men, and all men—the lowest, the poorest, the least esteemed! Thou God of the groaning, Thou God of the prisoner, Thou God of the sick, Thou God of the wandering, Thou Lord and Saviour of sinners, how dost Thou look upon the great scattered household here upon earth! Grant to-day that the thought of Thine infinite compassion, and the sense of Thy nearness to us, and of Thy power upon the soul, may enter into the mind of every one. Better than silver or gold, better than all precious stones are Thy thoughts. May our hearts shine with them; and may we rejoice in Thee, and hope in Thee, and in Thee triumph.

And now we pray that Thou wilt lead each one, according

to his circumstances, by the hand. We pray that Thou wilt bless to every one the conditions in which Thy providence has placed him. May we search not so much how to rid ourselves of pain, as how to convert it into obedience and virtue. May we seek not so much this height or that desired thing as out of every circumstance to extract some virtue to the honour and glory of our God. Comfort those who are in Thy presence. Relieve such as are in trouble. May they know that there is a God of consolation. Be near to those whose hearts are yet sore, wounded by the pangs of bereavement. Most graciously comfort them, as a mother comforteth her children. Be near to those who are in desolateness and loneliness, and who have no refuge but Thyself. Give Thine angels charge concerning them. Be with those who are seeking, but who find not, the gate of peace. We pray for all those who are perplexed in worldly affairs, and who are obliged, day by day, to contend earnestly for the faith of Thy providence, and for the conviction of God's thought of them. Give them the lordly virtue of rejoicing under affliction, and of towering into a true and Divine manhood, above the reach of all outward changes, and all mere earthly affairs. Draw near to those who are in prosperity. Shield them from the temptations to which they are liable, and inspire them with some conception of what it is for them to live, and to do that which shall be worthy of themselves and of their Saviour Jesus Christ.

May Thy kingdom extend everywhere, and may the open gates be thronged by those who are entering by the new and spiritual path into communion with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that Thou wilt take away every root of bitterness, all causes of offence, all envyings, all jealousies, and all hatreds, and bring Thy people together more and more perfectly. Grant that thus all elements that are from evil and from the Evil One may be driven out of the earth. Grant that men may hate no more, but learn

the life of love, until nations shall embrace each other, not in wrestling arms of conflict, but in a true spirit of benevolence; until the weak shall be under the care of the strong; until ignorance shall be done away; until superstition shall disappear, and all mankind shall see Thy salvation.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

a.

XXV.

OUT of all our trouble, our doubt, our fear, we are lifted up into Thy presence, our Father, to find comfort and light and peace. We rejoice that Thou hast the power of imparting Thyself. Thou that dwellest in eternal power art able to clothe with power the weak and the faint. Thou that dwellest in eternal purity art able to inspire righteousness in all that put their trust in Thee. Thou art the Comforter of the world. Thou hast been the Consolation of ages. Thou art still breathing forth Thine own nature, which is life and joy and peace; and all they that put their trust in Thee are, beneath the shadow of Thy wings, safe, to rejoice for evermore.

We pray that Thou wilt vouchsafe to us to-night that access by thought, by faith, and by love, which shall bring upon us the bright shining of Thy countenance. We do not speak of our unworthiness. We do not go back to trace, with a trembling hand, the lines of our transgression. Thou needest no remembrancers, nor do we. We would forget the days of darkness, and the hours of temptation. We would forget the sins that were a shame to us and a sorrow to Thy heart. We would forget all the things that are behind, that we may press forward toward the mark for the prize of our high calling in Christ. And we rejoice that Thou dost forget our sins, and dost sink the memory of them as in the sea. Thou wilt never make

mention of them again. In the glory of Thy goodness, in the grandeur of Thy magnanimity, Thou dost treat us, that are full of wickednesses out of which spring sins, as if we had never transgressed; and Thou dost clothe us in beauty who are not by nature beautiful in ourselves, and dost look upon us through Thine own benignity, and dost discern these things transfused and overlaid; and we rejoice that thus we stand in companionship with God, though we are unworthy. We rejoice that though we are deserving of another fate, we stand as Thy sons, members of Thy household, beloved, enlightened, inspired, guided, so that we go from strength to strength until we stand in Zion and before God.

Vouchsafe to every one of us the help that we need in seeking to live in a true Christian manhood. Help each one in the struggle that is laid upon him by his bodily conditions. In sickness, under vehement passion, under irritations, under trials that befog, under all things that take us out of the way of true manliness, we beseech of Thee that we may have Thy help. May those who are selfish, and who grovel in selfishness, and who rise up against this easily besetting tendency, find Thee every day at their right hand, breathing beneficence and benignity upon them. May any that are given to pride in its offensive ways—in its coldness, in its independence, in its obstinacy as before God—look to Thee evermore as their Helper. May those who strive against fiery passions that threaten conflagration to their soul cry to Thee for aid, and may it speedily come to them. We pray that those who are dull of apprehension and who find it more easy to know the things of sense than to know the things of the spirit may have Thee as their Schoolmaster; and wilt Thou teach them day by day. We pray that Thou wilt grant to all, according to their circumstances, Thy care. May those who are appointed to humble stations in life know how

to make them glorious by the outflowing of their own souls. May those who are in the midst of poverty, and whose power is limited and restricted, walk as the children of God, and redeem their lives from thrall and bondage. May those who are of feeble health, and who suffer by day and by night, find the way by which their sufferings shall glorify Thee, and enhance their manhood. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt be with such as are in the struggle of life, and are in their relations with men brought under all the temptations of covetousness and various overreaching. We pray That Thou wilt walk with them in the midst of their troubles, that they may become the children of light, and go out into the world better than those they find round about them. We pray that they may be free from ungodliness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon all those who are discharging the duties of the household—upon parents; upon children; upon brothers and sisters; upon all who are in the relations of friendship; upon all companions and partners. Grant, we pray Thee, that more and more greatness of soul one toward another in the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ may abound in them.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt bless us in our relations to our land. We pray that Thou wilt bless this nation; that the seed which has been sown, and which has been watered with tears and enriched with blood, may spring up and bring forth a hundredfold among men to the honour and glory of God. May this people not become proud of their power, nor of the largeness of their domain: rather may they rejoice in this, that they know the Lord, and yield obedience to His word. We pray that men may be precious in this land in the sight of their fellow-men. We pray that the ignorant may be instructed, that the poor may be succoured, that oppression may perish

under the influence of liberty, and that all may grow to the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and become free with the freedom by which Jesus makes His people free. We pray that this nation may not seek its own augmentation as against the uneducated and the weak. May all that are upon our borders receive the benefit of the light and sympathy of our people. And may the nations of the earth be brought more nearly together by the things that are best in men, and may the animal die out of them. Grant that more and more the day of passion, of raging, of violence in conflict, and of blood and sorrow, may pass away. Let the morning dawn at last. Many weary watchers through the ages have called for it and longed to see it. Lord, let the light fall upon the mountains and chase the darkness and the shadows away, and bring in that glorious day of prediction when all men shall love their fellow-men. Let love, the best and the last of all growths in time, become universal, and let the kingdoms of this world become, through love, the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall be everlasting praises. Amen. *a.*

XXVI.

WE thank Thee every hour, O Lord our God; we thank Thee consciously; and all the happiness, the hope and the joy that are within us unconsciously rise up toward Thee in thanksgiving and in praise; for Thou art, though we see Thee as yet but in part. The glory of Thy power, and the thunder thereof, no man knows; yet Thou hast disclosed Thyself to us both in nature and in Thy word, in the record of Thy dealings with men, and in our own experience from time to time, in less measure, so that we have a view of God, in power, in goodness, in tenderness, in mercy and in

fidelity, that fills the heaven with brightness and the future with hope; and we are enabled, under care and burdens and troubles, to look up, knowing that however dark it is beneath there is eternal light above; knowing that how weary soever the days may be they are flowing through the gorge and over the rocks to seek the flowery valley below; and days and years are waving us steadfastly on, towards the untroubled land. And we desire evermore to cherish within us thoughts that fill the soul with ripeness; that lift us above the power of sorrow; that take the weight from burdens; that make the hard things soft to our feet, so that the very flint can no more disturb and trouble us. We desire evermore to bear about with us such a thought of Christ's presence, of His mingling with us, of His transfusion into our souls, that we shall seem to ourselves to mount, as it were; to walk as He walked, to be upborne as He was upborne, to be victorious as He was victorious. And we pray that Thou wilt grant to every one of us, not only the things that are a joy externally, not only the things that are for the life that now is, but that inward inspiration, that culture of the soul, by which our impetuosity, our indomitable will, our pride so fruitful of selfishness, may be tempered and restrained, by which Christ may be in us, and the life that we live may be a life hidden in Him.

We pray that Thou wilt grant unto us this morning access through the Lord Jesus Christ to the eternal Father; and though we cannot form a conception of the Spirit-being of God, His glory shines in the face of the ages, and we transfer to Him the knowledge we are thus able to gain, and we rejoice in Him as in His Son, our Saviour.

We beseech of Thee that every one may be able to-day to draw near to his God—through the light, if he be in prosperity—and behold his portion, and know of the strength that is laid up for him and of the fidelity of God

in his behalf—his father's God; the God of youth and manhood; the God of all power and of all goodness. We pray that every one may feel to-day to rejoice in the Physician that is revealed, through Jesus Christ, for the salvation of every one that needs Divine help. Enter into every heart to-day, to behold, to measure, to advise. Deliver us, we pray Thee, from habits that have hidden from us the real state of our hearts. Arouse us from apathy, and from that fatal contentment which holds back our aspirations. And grant that we may re-measure our lives, the ends which we pursue, the means by which we pursue them, and the affections that are most active in us. Grant that we may take an inward vision of ourselves, and see our hearts as Thou dost. Teach us, O God, and try us, and reveal to us our inward dispositions; not for despondency, but that we may spring up with renewed alacrity. Knowing the power that is for us to be greater than all that is against us, may we take hold with hope upon the Lord Jesus Christ, that He may become our Saviour, not by-and-by, but every day and every hour, in everything and everywhere. And so we pray that there may be access this morning to every heart. May there not be some to whom Thou shalt come this day disclosed for the first time? Wilt Thou not seek again to be born into the hearts of one and another? And though Thou art but the child Jesus, wilt Thou not find abode in some that need Thee—that need Thee in their strength; that need Thee in their weakness; that need Thee in the midst of their prosperity; that need Thee in adversity, or that need Thee in their sorrow or in their gladness? May there be some hearts that to-day shall receive the Saviour, never to lose Him again, whose lives shall hereafter be so identified with His that they shall be able to say, The life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon

this congregation, and upon all the households that are here represented. If there be fears of sickness or trouble in any, abide with them for peace' sake; and grant that peace may come from Thine indwelling. Are there those that are weak and failing? Be Thou their strength. We pray for the little ones—for the trooping bands of children that are watched over with such anxious love by so many. And watch Thou over the parents of the children. Be Thou as a Father to the fathers, and as a Mother to the mothers; and hold in the arms of Thy love their children; and lay Thy hands upon their heads, and bless them all.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon all Thy servants who are here. Bless them in their avocations. May they go forth in the spirit of integrity, and honesty, and truth, and faith, to serve God in their day and generation among men; and may they be kept from the ways of evil, from grasping, from avarice, from domineering pride, from violations of principle. May they be kept, we pray Thee, in temperance, in all patience, in all justice, and in all fidelity, looking, not every man on his own things alone, but also every man on the things of others. Wilt Thou enlarge the sympathy of man for man.

We pray that Thou wilt grant unto this Church, in the year that is now ending, a sense of its great obligations to Thee; and in the year that is drawing near wilt Thou vouchsafe to it Thy presence, Thy constantly outspread hands for ever full and for ever emptying. And grant, O Lord Jesus, that we may learn more and more of Thee, and that more and more we may abound in all thanksgiving. We pray that Thou wilt bless all in our schools—all that teach and all that are taught—the officers and the superintendents. Bless all that go forth to bear the tidings of truth, and to assuage sorrows and troubles. May they bear the spirit of the Master, and be ordained by the Holy Ghost for their work of beneficence and mercy.

We pray for all Thy Churches, and for all ministers of the Gospel of every name. We pray that all divisions, all middle walls of partition, may be cast down. We pray that there may be an amelioration of prejudice; that there may be a passing away of bigotry; that the selfishness which leads one to build himself up over against another may be taken away; that there may be in the Church universal of the Lord Jesus Christ such lives of love and of its redeeming power that men by their example shall be led from the visible to the invisible; from things seen among men to the unseen glories of God.

And we pray for our nation. Be pleased to bless it in all its great and widespread interests. Give prosperity more and more to knowledge and to industry. Grant that all thrift may lead to morality, and that morality may lead to piety, and that this nation may be sanctified of Thee, and be as Thy guiding hand in these climes, to fulfil the promise which has been made to the earth respecting the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Come, thou long-delaying One, Thou that hast cast about Thyself the garments of darkness and clouds and judgment—come at last, as the spring comes over the howling winter. Come, that wars may roar no more. Come, that sorrow and sighing may flee away. Come, that the voice of sympathy may be heard from every land, and the whole earth join in the universal chorus, and in ascribing praise, and honour, and glory, and dominion unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. Amen.

a.

XXVII.

OUR Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the light that shines from the face of our Saviour. He stands in the light of Thy countenance, radiant; and we in His light are born

into the new life, and become children of the day. We rejoice that all the superstitions and all the fears that have hung around the ignorant way of life rise as the clouds in the morning before the sun, and disappear in the bright shining of the Sun of Righteousness. We rejoice that Thou dost call us children, and dost teach us to call Thee Father, and in these words dost slay all fear, and drive away the motives that have held men down from the beginning. We are free. We are not under the dominion of evil demons We are not subject to the sweeping decrees of fate. We are not helpless, born as the insect to fly through the day, and then to perish like it for ever. We are of Thee, we go to Thee again, and all our life intermediate between birth and departure is filled up with Thy providence and Thy guidance; and Thou art not stern and exacting. It is Thy love that draws, and Thy love that punishes. Before and behind, and all around us, Thou art the atmosphere in which we live and move and have our being; and whatever is repressive of evil, and leads us to shrink from it, is from Thee; while whatever draws us toward the things that are just and true and right are of Thee. We rejoice in Thine inspiration day by day; and we rejoice that the light which we gain prepares us for more light still, so that the further we see the better we are enabled to see yet further. Thus it is that we grow to the stature of Christ Jesus, with all the fulness that He is filled with, being brethren and heirs like unto Him. And we beseech of Thee that we may have every day the consciousness of His companionship and His protecting care. May we rejoice in the Lord though all things perish, and our hopes are blighted, and disappointments come to one and another of our desires. May we rise superior to all these experiences of the way; and for the joy that is set before us, for the certainty of our coming glory, may we rejoice even in the midst of troubles and trials. May we be ashamed of weakness. As Thou art not

ashamed of us because we are weak, may we be ashamed of the tears and sorrows to which we become captive. And yet Thou dost come to relieve captives that are overwhelmed with their own troubles. May we be ashamed of anything that is not Divine. May we reach out our hands, and with yearning hearts and profound aspirations may we long for that which is truest, and purest, and noblest, and best. And yet, though at every step we fall short of that which is noblest and best, we know that Thou dost not condemn us nor cast us away, but that with infinite care and with Divine Fatherhood Thou dost lift us again to our feet. We are cast down often, but we are never destroyed; and we bear about in us evermore the tokens of Thy care and Thy love. Who shall harm us if such be our tutelage? If Thou art our Father and our Redeemer; if Thou art our Brother and our Lord; if Thou art the Captain of our salvation; if Thou hast slain evil, and Satan, and destroyed death itself; and if through Thy suffering Thou hast risen to the light of joy, and dost distribute joy to all Thine own, who shall be against us, or daunt us, or take away our portion of present joy?

And yet we beseech of Thee that we may not live for the joys that are transient, for their lower forms, for that which is incidental to our earthly life. Evermore may we live for such joy as is acceptable to Thee.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt be near to us this morning. We thank Thee for a tabernacle in the wilderness. We thank Thee that in our wanderings and leisure and rest we find companionship of faith and hope, and meet the Church gathered from many Churches; and that wherever two or three are gathered together in Thy name, Thou art with them, and dost receive them as Thine own household. May this casual gathering in Thy providence be a blessing to all of us. May we cheer each other, help each other, and love each other. With the same needs, the same burdens

of the body, the same aches and pains, the same sicknesses, the same sorrows and bereavements, the same disappointments, the same transgressions oft repeated and oft mourned in vain, the same Saviour, the same hope and faith in Him, the same redemption by His blood, and the same resurrection and rejoicing through Him in immortal glory, grant that we may be bound together inseparably by these great common faiths and experiences, and that the things in which we are divided may be lost out of sight and utterly forgotten for ever. For the things in which we agree are eternal as God; and the things in which we differ are transient, and perish by the way.

Be near to those who are upon the great sea, to those who are wandering in foreign lands, and to those who are in the wilderness, and keep them as in the hollow of Thy hand, and restore them again to their homes with the experience of God's fidelity and goodness. But we are all strangers and pilgrims even at home. We are only in tabernacles here. Our city is far away—yet not far. It shines to our eyes through faith day by day. Many of us are almost there. Grant, we pray Thee, the pilgrim's blessing to rest upon our band. And by-and-by, with hands clasped in inseparable love, we will gather about Thy feet, O Lover of our souls, and say, Not unto us, but unto Thy Name, be all the praise and the glory. Amen.

a.

XXVIII.

We desire, our Father, to make mention of Thy great goodness to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. As, by the grace of Thy providence, by the dealing of Thy hand, by all the accumulation of the advantages in which Thou hast taught the human race how to aspire and grow in grace, Thou hast brought forth in us more earnest desires, larger

expectations, more passionate aspirations, we rejoice that Thou hast in a corresponding way opened up to our view the glories of the life beyond. We rejoice that Thou hast given us so much hope of the future. We rejoice that upon the shadows Thou has cast so much light; that even upon uncertainties Thou hast cast so much that calms fear; and that upon the old dread Thou hast given the word of command, so that the winds have ceased and the waves are at rest. We thank Thee for the salvation that comes from the love of God to all that accept it; to all that live in faith and hope, and in the communion of the Holy Ghost.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon all who are in Thy presence to-day. Sanctify to them Thy dealings with them. Administer rebuke where it is needed. Bring sorrow and the shadow of it upon all those that will be made better by them. We pray that Thou wilt grant that weakness itself may send forth a voice of thanksgiving from out of the hearts of Thy servants. Bless those who are standing in the strength of prosperity, and those that are cast down yet not destroyed. We pray that Thou wilt grant that all, according to the fortunes and circumstances in which they find themselves, may give thanksgiving and praise to God to-day.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon all the houses where sorrow wrestles even unto despair, where there is heart-breaking, where there is hope deferred that maketh the heart sick. Grant that all bereavements, all over-mastering sorrows, all sharp reproaches, all beatings down of pride, all disappointment in the overthrow of cherished plans, all remorse—grant, O Lord, that these experiences of the soul may be as medicines casting out evil and bringing in health.

We pray that Thy blessing may rest upon this whole city. Thou hast been pleased to permit in our midst, in the week

that is past, great troubles in large procession to households, coming with overpowering horror. O God, Thou that art the God of the night and darkness, Thou that art the God of storms, Thou that workest in the winter as in the summer, grant, we beseech of Thee, that these manifestations of sorrow and trouble may not come unblessed. Is not this a ripping up by Thy plough of furrows into which seed shall be sown? and may we not look for the waving harvest to follow these upturnings? O Lord, we pray that Thou wilt sustain those that mourn. Bring light into the dungeon of silence. Bring peace to the tempest-tossed and not comforted. Assuage the sorrows of those that must sorrow, and temper their suffering by Thine own gentleness and goodness, and open before those to whom the door of this life is shut the better door of the life that is to come; and bring the future near by faith to those who need its consolations.

We pray also that we may take warning, and do with our might what our hands find to do. Grant, we pray Thee, that we may not be afraid of sudden death, nor of any death, nor of death anywhere. Always and evermore may we bear about the consciousness that this whole life is but a bond for the time, and that the inheritance comes by-and-by. May we not prize too much that which is now; but from it may we look perpetually forward to the great and joyous life that awaits us in the world which is beyond.

Hear us in these petitions, not only for ourselves, but for all the cities in our land. We pray that in this time of severity the poor may come up into remembrance of those that are more abundantly blessed than they. Grant that the hearts of charity may be warmed everywhere. May Thy cause and kingdom spread abroad. May all distemperatures be overruled. May this great nation, in Thine hand, be restrained from whatever is wrong. May justice and truth rule. May knowledge spread. May this people

grow up in integrity and piety and strength, to the glory of God and the welfare of men.

And to Thy Name shall be praises for evermore. Amen.

a.

XXIX.

WE bless Thy Name, our Father, that we may draw near to Thee familiarly; that we may, in addressing Thee, use every term of endearment which belongs to love and the household; that we may call ourselves Thine own sons; and that we may call Thee our Father, our Friend, and our Brother. We rejoice that Thou hast made Thyself known to us by all those terms which convey, in human language and experience, the best things, and the things which are the most needful to men in the stress and strife of human life. We rejoice that Thou art the Light, and that the morning dawns upon us when Thou dost draw near. Thou art our Sun; Thou art our Shield; Thou art our Tower; Thou art our Pavilion where Thou dost hide us until the storm be overpast. Thou art the Bread of life and the Water of life. Thou art the Way and the Door. Thou art the Redeemer and Intercessor. Thou art the Forerunner. Thou art everything in this life, and everything in the life which is to come; and our life is hid in Thee; and all the sources of our life are in Thee; and all the influences that inspire us and give us ambition for nobler things are of Thee; and all the power which rouses us in the midst of temptations and troubles and weariness and sacrifices, and upholds us and carries us forward, is of Thee. We rejoice that thus the sources of our life are bright, and glowing, and pure, and holy; and that in Thee we live and move and have our being.

Accept our thanks for all Thy goodness to us in days that are past; accept the consecration which we make to Thee for the days that are to come; and we beseech of Thee that

it may not be a vague and wandering wish, but that it may be a holy and deep-seated purpose. Though Thou dost work in us to will and to do of Thy good pleasure, abide with us to give us evermore the impulse that shall take us away from things low and sordid, and lift us up toward things radiant and noble. Deliver us from the power of easily besetting sins. Deliver us from evil habits. Deliver us from the bias of evil. Deliver us from things that are selfish, and proud, and impure, and wrong; and grant that we may from day to day grow and increase in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We pray that Thou wilt bless all those in this congregation who are labouring in word and doctrine. Bless those that are teaching. May they be themselves taught of God; and may they bear in their own spirit the light of the Gospel to those to whom they come. We pray that Thou wilt bless those who are disbursing charity to the needy. As they water may they themselves be watered. We pray that all those who explore the ways of trouble and darkness and sickness, all those who visit the prisoner, may bear about with them the thought of Christ's approval. May they already hear Him saying to them, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.

We pray that Thou wilt revive Thy work in this Church. Quicken the members thereof with the spirit of prayer. May they be more and more importunate, and labour with greater zeal. We thank Thee that so many are aroused, and that one and another are being brought into Thy kingdom. We pray that Thy Spirit may be poured out more and more upon them, and that men may be concerned in respect to their souls' eternal salvation. We pray that our prayers may ascend for those who are without Christ, without God, and without hope in this world. Oh, remember the children of praying parents who are going on down to destruction. Forbid that those who stand in the midst of light and know-

ledge should cast away all their privileges and perish. Forbid that men should be allured by the deceits of this world, and forget the eternal verities. Oh, bring near to all the thought of the dying hour, and of the tremendous scenes beyond. May men render a reasonable service to God and themselves, and turn from that which is evil and seek that which is good; and may they press forward until the days grow short and few, and seek their salvation because it is God that is working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure.

May all the Churches in our land be blessed. May all the causes of beneficence everywhere come up in remembrance before Thee. May Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done in all the earth.

We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

a.

XXX.

WE thank Thee, our Heavenly Father, for all the hope and all the gladness that are revealed through Jesus Christ our Lord. We thank Thee that we are not called to a life of sorrow, but out of sorrow to a life of joy; that we are not called from liberty to imprisonment, but out of bondage, to be free men. We rejoice that we are not to be weaned from this earth with nothing else, but that we are called from the things that are inferior to the things that are superior—from all that this world has, mixed with care and sorrow and trouble, to thrones and dominions in the land of perfect peace. We are glad that there is another sphere of loving which is in harmony with itself. We rejoice that there is a land where all those who by faith and hope and trust in God are exalted above the outward and the physical shall be gathered together, and shall dwell in unity, and in perfect peace and joy. Thither have gone, oh, how many, from us

and from our households! We all have pledges in heaven —our forerunners—those that wait for us, and that yet remember, and love, and long, and draw secretly, so that our thoughts, we know not why, run up thither, without wings and without feet, in an unknown way, and find that which we desire.

O Lord our God, we desire to take refuge by our thoughts, when we cannot escape in any other way, from the smoke, from the dust, and from the oppression of this life. We desire to lift ourselves up by that which is divine in us, and by our soul-power to triumph over the body, so that, though this outward man is perishing day by day, the inward man may be renewed with sovereign joy and strength. Teach us, O Lord, what are those things which belong to us by our birthright. Open our understanding by the Holy Ghost. Give to us, if not the power to syllable the heavenly language, yet the power in thought and in feeling to be like them who are near to Thee—like our children and our beloved, like the general assembly and Church of the First-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect—so that we may know that we belong to the great communion of the saints, and that, though we are yet in the land of battle, we are of the Church Triumphant, and are soon to appear therein.

And take away from our minds all darkness, all heathenism, all superstition, and all fear. May we behold the river of death as no dark and tumultuous stream, but as a stream flowing with silver light between flowery banks; while sweet fields arrayed in living green stand calling us from beyond. Oh, grant that the thought of dying may be sweeter to us than sounds of music and festivities among men. For what is this life but a waiting? What but a life of toil and education? Then only do we come to ourselves when we rise to Thee, and stand in Thy presence. May we have inward longings for this enfranchisement. May we have yearnings

for that better estate. May we believe in it. May we roll out joyful thoughts toward it. May it transform in us our whole thought of age, of passing away, of weakness and decay here, of departing from this life, and of losing friends —whom while we lose we save. They that are about us may be lost, but not they who have gone forth. They are saved. No change, no departure, no separation awaits them. They are nearer to us in death than they were in life. They are no longer subject to all the accidents of the body; no longer subject to all those rude confoundings which belong to this lower estate. They are within the reach of thought, of faith, of hope, and of love. Yea, they commingle with our very souls, and are much to us, as we are much to them, though they are invisible. More than ever before are they sacred and sainted; and yet in sweet fellowship and familiarity.

For all this revelation of beauty, and of its hope and benign influence, O Thou that didst bring life and immortality to light, we give thanks.

And now we pray that we may learn to bear, with the hope of coronation soon, all those ills which belong to this life. May we not count it hard that we are called to bear burdens. Did not our Master also walk in the flesh? Had He where to lay His head? Did He not look upon the birds and the very foxes as His superiors in outward comfort? And why should we, His disciples, think it strange that we have our trials and troubles? May we disdain the unmanly complaints that other men make; and may the grace of God work in us all patience, and hopefulness, and courage, and all cheer: for at the very worst it can be but a little while before the iron that pierces shall be a golden crown that glorifies.

Grant, we pray Thee, therefore, that we may be steadfast unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the

Lord. Grant unto every one in Thy presence the bounty and the blessing that is specially his to-day. Thou hast something for every one, though he know it not. Thou art in communion drawing near to every one. May all recognise Thy presence with them as a thought, as a sweet disposition, as a hope, as an aspiration, or as a power. May they know the touch of God upon the soul, and rejoice; and may they look to see what the gift of God is to do. And as we walk forth every morning in the summer to behold what blossoms nature hath brought out, so may we look to see what the Divine touch has brought forth in us. Grant that the riches of Thy grace, and the fulness of Thy love and goodness, may be borne home to every one of us, a medicine for sorrow, food for hunger, and water for thirst. So may we be stayed upon Thee, and be competent for our affairs, either to control them or to endure them.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing upon all the families that are associated together. Bless them in their companionship. Bless them in their children. And grant that these little ones may grow up in truth, in faithfulness, in honour, and in manly piety.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing upon all our schools and missions, and upon all the exertions which Thy servants are putting forth every whither for the amelioration of woe, for the eradication of evil, and for the promotion of intelligence and true godliness.

Bless, we pray Thee, all the Churches round about us and their pastors. Bless all those who are labouring in word and doctrine this day, and give them power from on high.

Look upon our whole land. Blessed mightily in days past, rescued from devouring evils, and brought forth therefrom by the grace of God, may it yet be strong for goodness in an increasing measure. And from this nation may there flow to all the nations around us the blessings of peace, of justice, of good government, and of piety. And hasten the

day when all the earth shall hear the voice of God, and be called to supreme felicity.

And to Thy Name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be the praise for evermore. Amen.

a.

XXXI.

WE draw near to Thy presence, our Father, not as those who must needs tell Thee their wants,—Thou knowest them altogether; not as those who need to persuade Thee in supplication,—Thou art more ready to give than we are to receive. We draw near to Thee because we have found it to be pleasant and joyous; and, although we may not know why it is, Thou knowest; and those that sit down in the light of Thy countenance find summer; and all joy springs where Thy light and Thy love are.

We thank Thee for the mercies which we have received. We thank Thee for the truth which has shone upon us. We thank Thee that Thy truth grows more and more ineffable, and that we can perceive that while in the earlier days, with our rude and gross fancies, we expected it almost as a thing physical and visible, we are being taught more and more to receive it spiritually, and to understand how little of it we can take; for he that is bathed in the light of the sun all the day long consumes but little of the light and of the warmth, nor understands what is the sweep and the power of the sunlight through all the universe. We discern something of God, we discern the light, the white light of the heavenly land; and we learn more and more how wide is the scope of spiritual truth. But we rejoice that we are not altogether ignorant, although, with what power soever we are endowed, we can take in but the least part of that which is infinite and ineffable. We rejoice that, as the soul shall feed on truth, the supply is

immeasurable, and that, much as we can obtain in this life, we are to obtain from Thee more; and that one look from Thine eye, and one word from Thy lips, and one laying on of Thy hand, will be more to us than the rest of our life.

Now, Lord, we beseech of Thee that we may to-day enter into the thought of God, the blessedness of being His, the blessedness of serving Him, and the blessedness of ripening so that we may be transplanted into His very presence. May we learn to love what Thou lovest, and to hate that which Thou hatest; to do the things that are pleasing to Thee, and to avoid the things that grieve Thee, that all our life on earth may be a life in God.

We pray that we may have not only the general guidance of Thy presence, but the special guidance of Thy Spirit. May our conscience and our love be so sensitive that they shall recognise the things that come unto us from above, that we may be led of the Spirit, and walk safely, whether in a rude and rough way, hard and desolate, or amid gardens and pleasant places, by the side of still waters. Still, may we evermore feel that we are guided inwardly by Thy light and warmth, and by all the influence of Thy nature upon us. So walking, may we rejoice that we are children of light; and may we reflect it; may our life teach other men where to go and what to do. May we not be continually cast down, mournfully regretting that we live so poorly that we are obliged to apologize for our lives. Help us to live with such simplicity, such truth, such kindness unvarying, such effluent love, that men shall know that we are Thine; and that, though we are so imperfect and so small, what there is of us represents the soul of God.

We pray that Thou wilt help us in all the crises of our lives; that when we obtain the greatest victories, we may not be discouraged, and run from the battle-field; that

when we can reach the higher realms of attainment, we may not forsake the uncompleted work in despair. May we be patient, long-suffering, steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Grant Thy blessing upon those whose work on earth is almost completed. May their autumnal days be rich in colour and full of beauty. Grant, we beseech of Thee, that they may discern afar off the city coming down from heaven; and as they look into the air, not empty of light, may they there discern that which Thy servant of old beheld—the new heavens coming down like a bride adorned for her husband.

Be with the younger and more active ones who are standing in the midst of life, and sustaining the affairs of life, that they may be strong in the Lord, fervent in spirit, pure, true, just, right; and may they be able to carry out rectitude, straightening the crookedness of human affairs, repairing what selfishness has disarranged, and doing the things that shall make this world better, and so happier.

We pray for those who are ascending into places of trust and honour, that they may bring thither a holier ambition and a nobler sense of humanity than those who have gone by, never letting down their conceptions of righteousness to follow the path of apparent success. Grant that they may stand strong in the Lord, for that which is righteous and good.

Bless the children. May they grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. May they be instructed, not alone by word of mouth, but by the sweet example of life, and so be consecrated to righteousness. We pray that thus our households may be as the porches of heaven; having something of the clear light of Divine glory shining into these temples of love. May Thy servants the parents be undiscouraged. May they be endued from day to day

with the spirit of patience, of genial love, and of self-sacrifice; that they may rear their offspring for God, sure of meeting them again by-and-by, when they shall have left this world. Whether the parents go first or the children precede them, may they all have the great Father's house in their minds from day to day, the hope of the soul, that they may be ever looking forward to it, and find in the certainty of it a relief from care. May they have an equipoise in all the despondencies of their life; and so may their life here, while filled with earthly duties, be looking forward evermore to the other life and to the nobler love and joy.

Bless, we pray Thee, the labours of Thy people everywhere—those unseen and those manifest and public. Bless all those who are brought under the influence of Thy servants who are teaching them. May ignorance be dispelled by a heavenly light. May men be won back from following presumptuous sins. May men be reformed who have cast away purity. Grant that on every side righteousness may prevail, and that Thy servants, everywhere, may be ambassadors thereof.

Bless the Churches of this city, and all those who are preaching the Gospel of Christ therein. May they see eye to eye; may there be no root of bitterness that shall spring up to divide them; and may they walk hand-in-hand in the truth of Christ, and in a blessed confidence in each other.

We pray that Thou wilt bring on the time when we shall again hear the singing of birds, when the streams shall be full, when the grass and flowers shall appear once more, and when we shall know that the spring has come. Grant that our Churches may see days of salvation, that men may be gathered in and enter openly upon a Christian life, and walk safely therein.

May this great nation be saved from infidelity. May it

hold fast to God as God has held fast to us and our fathers. As through many days their hearts cleaved unto Him, so may ours; that we may obey all His laws and precepts, and be a nation of righteousness, a God-fearing people.

Let Thy kingdom come everywhere; fulfil Thy promise of bringing in all the scattered tribes and nations of the globe; and may the earth at last shine resplendent in Divine love.

And to the Father, Son, and Spirit shall be praises evermore. Amen.

a.

XXXII.

THANKS be to Thy Name, O Lord Jesus, that Thou didst open a way for us by which we can come unto the Father, with enough understanding of the Divine nature to encourage us to leave our burden there, to alleviate our fear, to inspire hope in our souls, and to fill us with comfort and joy. We do not seek to understand the whole circuit of Thy life and being. It is too mighty for us. It is lifted above our experience, beyond the reach of our thought, and outside of the scope of our feeling; and we struggle in vain to understand its immensity. But it is sufficient that, clothed with power and wisdom and love, Thou dost guide and govern all things for the final welfare of Thy creatures, and that the centre of power is not in hands that are cold and hard and cruel, but is in the hands of One who loves us amidst the strivings of this lower life, amidst the dashings to and fro of ungoverned passions among men that almost doubt if there can be an administration of love anywhere. We receive with great joy and with full faith the truth that there is a land of peace, that there is a Centre of power where perfect love prevails, and that all things, from the uttermost bounds of creation, and from every period of

time, in one grand procession, are moving in complete subordination and adjustment and perfectness, in love and in peace. In this faith and belief we rest and rejoice. Though our way is clouded at times, though at times the thunder and tempest of this world's passions disturb our settled confidence, when we live by sight and not by faith, yet we rejoice that when we get back to faith and confidence again all our best thoughts rise up once more, and we have inspirations that carry us through the drudgery of daily life, its oppositions and its oppressions. We rejoice that we have rest in Thee when we find it nowhere else, that we have trust in Thee when our trust in men is broken, and that we have hope in Thee when there is no ground for hope in any other direction.

And now we beseech of Thee that we may know how more perfectly to avail ourselves of the friendship and inspiration and love which are to be found in Jesus Christ for every one that needs. Take away from us all those obscurations which come from unbelief. Deliver us from the carelessness and heedlessness and running hither and thither for the support of that arm of flesh by which we are hindered from coming to Thee. May we know Him in whom is our whole hope and help. May we know Him with a personal knowledge. May we know Him as adopted to our special and personal wants. May we know Him as our Teacher. May we know Him as the Rectifier of our dispositions. May we know Him as One who is acquainted with all our circumstances. Grant that every one may be conscious that his Leader and Master is Jesus: and may the way before him be clear to the eye of faith and hope. In our daily life may we all so live in Christ that at last He shall abide with us, and we shall be temples, from which He shall go out no more for ever.

But behold with what difficulties the way is beset; behold how many hindrances rise up to obstruct the ways of men;

and according to the measure of Thy tender mercies look upon those who feebly, faintly, and even fruitlessly struggle in the way of right. Grant that their help may be from on high.

May those who are afar off feel the drawings of Jesus Christ, and know what grace and beauty there is in Him, the Chief among ten thousand, and the One altogether lovely. May those who have cast aside for the time their faithfulness feel that sorrow of heart which shall lead them to inward searchings and repentance; and may they return again to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. May those who are immersed in worldly affairs find themselves warmed and strengthened by the inspiration of Thy presence. May those who are called to go through trials, to bear burdens, or to suffer bereavements, have in Thee, day by day, that Friend who shall give them comfort and strength. May Thy life infuse itself into their life; and wilt Thou say to them, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

We commend to Thee all the families that are accustomed to group themselves together about the altar of this Church. We pray for the little children that in this place have been consecrated in baptism, or in any way have been set apart by their parents for the service of God.

We pray for those who are separated from us, and who in Thy providence are unable to mingle with us in the services of the sanctuary. Be with those who are on the sea. Command it, that it shall be merciful to them. We pray for those that are in foreign lands. Grant that while they are strangers and pilgrims there, their thoughts and ours may meet, day by day, around the common Throne of grace and mercy.

We pray for the aged, who are appointed unto death. We pray for those that are walking in a weary way. We pray that Thou wilt have compassion upon all classes and

conditions of Thy creatures. Open the hearts of men with a true and generous sympathy for their fellow-men.

May Thy work go on in this Church, in this city, in the city adjoining, throughout our own land, and throughout the world, until the blessed day of prediction shall come, and the kingdom of the Lord shall hang as an unsetting sun for a thousand years over the earth.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

a.

XXXIII.

How joyful are they, our Father, who have gone up from amidst our fears and our sorrows to inherit with Thee eternal blessedness! There are no clouds in their sky; there is no fear in their future. They stand knowing themselves at last, and beholding Thee; and, having tasted the atmosphere round about Thee, they are satisfied. While we toil between dark and light, tempest-tossed, often, and not comforted, in swoons or in deceitful calms, still striving by faith, and by hope—not by that which we are, not by that which we have attained, not by that which we know, but by that which we hope for, we live. We thank Thee that there is this rest that remaineth for the people of God. Wide open stand the gates thereunto; and none need have any other reason for availing themselves of it than that they need it and desire it. Whosoever will is called, and is welcome; and multitudes there are flocking thitherward; and every day, and every hour, souls released from thrall and bondage come forth; and we rejoice that now, at last, we look with unwet eyes upon their going; that we look now no longer as though the winter were coming. When the singing birds go, they go to summer; and we follow on, and rejoice with thanks that heaven itself becomes to

us the inspiration, the hope the victory of life, while yet we are here below.

We pray, O Lord Jesus, that Thou wouldst stoop down with Thine infinite influence, with all the breath and inspiration of Thine heart, to Thy servants who are gathered together in this place; that they may not hide even from themselves, as they cannot from Thee, any want, any sorrow, any sadness, any repentance or remorse. We pray that they may open their whole souls to the refreshment of Thy presence and to Thine indwelling. Be Thou this day in every heart, to give light in the dark places thereof, and strength to its weakness. Give it right direction, where wanderings and errors have taken it amiss.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt be all in all; food or medicine; light or rest; joy or needed sorrow. Grant to each one, we pray Thee, that which each one needs. As Thou didst call Thy disciples by name, and as Thou didst make Thyself known to Mary in the Garden by calling her name, so call every one in this assembly by name, so that each shall recognise Thy presence. In Thyself all gifts, all influences, centre; and what have we need to pray for, if Thou art with us, but to beseech Thee to abide, to dwell in us evermore, that Thy will and ours may be one?

Be gracious to those that are too feeble to take in all the vision. Draw near to the sick of heart. Draw near to those that toil on the sea, in the night, and cannot come to the land—yet not to affright them. Draw near to all who are sick, and cannot come to Thee. Draw near to every one according to Thy great mercy. Not according to the feebleness of our understanding, nor according to our interpretation of human want, but according to the greatness of Thy goodness, and of Thy lovingkindness, and of Thy tender mercy, make Thyself known unto this people today. Make those who are advanced in life and whose

shadows fall far behind them, look evermore with brightening face to the life that is to come; and may they more and more rejoice that the days of their pilgrimage are few and short. May those that stand in the midst of battle not cast vilely away their armour and their hope, but may they, in good report and in evil report, in darkness and in light, in weakness and in strength, be able to carry themselves as the sons of God; and so may the name of Christ be, not an ornament nor a vanity, but an inspiration and a strength in every time of need.

We pray that Thou wilt bless the young, that they may grow up more and more rich of heart, more just and manly, and in all things better and nobler. We beseech Thee that they may outrun those who have gone before them; and give to the world better patterns than we have given to it.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy presence this day to all who teach and to all who are taught. Remember the multitudes that throng our schools and missions. Will the Lord be gracious to them, and to all the households from which they come—to the parents of the children, to the children, and to all that befriend them? Fill those that teach with the sweetness and the purity and the enthusiasm of the gospel of love. And we pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to the superintendents, and all the officers of our schools, that Thy work in their hands may not cease at any time; and out of that work may Thy light dawn, day by day, an unsetting sun. And we pray that Thou wilt bless all who go forth into the streets and bye-ways, and to our hospitals, poor-houses, and jails. May those who carry light and comfort to the prisoners, and the sick, and the neglected, be themselves greatly filled with the power and the sweetness of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray, O Lord, that we may overcome evil with good. May we not tarry among the thorns and briars that are scattered along our

way here; may we lift up our heads even in the thicket and forest, and discern the sky above, where there are no storms, where there is no night, where there are no adversaries, where God is, and eternal peace, and the full fruition of noble friendship and divine association. And grant unto us every one an ambition that overtops earthly honour—that goes higher than any arrow from any bow can fly, sent by the strongest hand of ambition here below. Grant that we may live in the hope of Christ, in the joy of His salvation, and in the certainty of living again above and beyond the infirmities of this mortal life.

Grant Thy blessing upon Thy Churches and upon Thy ministering servants. May they be more and more possessed of the Divine spirit, and more and more may their teaching be blessed to the upholding of Thy people, and to the conversion of those that have wandered away from the right path.

Grant Thy blessing to all governors and all judges and all magistrates. Bless all teachers, and all who are diffusing knowledge, that intelligence may carry no poison, that it may go forth with purification and light, and that this whole land may be built up in truth, in morality, and in godliness.

May the nations of the earth learn war no more. May the time of peace at last come. May ignorance and superstition depart. May all things that do hate men and tread them under foot pass away. And may the race rise and be strong, that from them may drop all the heritage of weakness and all mischiefs that spring from ignorance, and that, from the rising of the sun until the going down of the same, all men may know Thy Name and Thy Spirit.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be praises evermore. Amen. *a.*

XXXIV.

WE draw near to Thee as children to parents, our Father. Thou hast made Thyself known to us, not by the thunder of Thy power, not by the wide circumference of Thy wisdom. Thou hast been pleased to call Thyself by such names as interpret Thee through our household affection. We understand, now, something of Thee, since we are brought up to know fatherhood, first as children look up to strength and helpfulness, and afterwards as parents look down upon weakness and helplessness. Thus we learn how to look up to Thee, not only, but perceive also how Thou dost look down upon us. Our own consciousness, in our best moods interpreting Thy word, tells us what is Thy government, and what are Thy thoughts, and what is the way of the Lord in the human soul. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt help us to draw near to Thee this morning without presumption, without undue familiarity, and yet with the sweet and sacred familiarity of love. We are not afraid of Thee. We have abundant occasion for fear, if repeated transgressions should inspire fear; but Thou art our Physician, and our sins are our ailments, and we draw near to Thee for help in time of need. Let Thy goodness fill the heavens to our thought, that we quake not, nor tremble as before a devourer, but rather rejoice in the presence of the Healer. May we know what is the nature of holiness, and have compassion upon the unholy. May we know what it is to inspire life where there is death, and strength where there is weakness, and wholeness where there is disease.

We beseech of Thee that we may be endowed with thoughts and purposes worthy of the nature of love. Since Thou dost work thereby, and since the law in heaven and upon the earth is love, oh, grant that it may be interpreted to us; and as on this day, immortal in the ages,

there lay entombed the Saviour of the world, from whose sepulchre the stone was rolled, and who came forth and brought life and liberty to light, so out of the world-life may there be a resurrection in the hearts and understandings of Thy people, that there may come forth the things long buried there, waiting for glorious exaltation into strength and power. And we pray that we may interpret this inward revelation, not by the understanding alone, but by the heart, and thus glorify the understanding.

Let Thy blessing rest upon us this morning. Pilgrims and strangers are we, indeed. Gathered in Thy providence here, we desire, standing upon common mercies and with multiplied experiences in common, to unite together in thanksgiving for Thy great goodness to us. Our sorrows have been chastened—and who is there that has not had his sorrow? Our burdens have been lightened—and who has not carried some burden? Our hopes Thou hast sustained in hopeless hours. Thou hast, in times of despondency, dawned upon our horizon as a bright and morning Star, sweeping away the night, and shining at last no longer as a star, but as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His beams.

And we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt grant to all of us such a sense of the Divine presence, and such a thought of the God within us, that, with all our imperfection, all our ignorance, all our prejudices, all our ill-kept resolutions, all our insecure purposes and choices, we may feel ourselves supported by Thee. Look upon us, Thou pitying Saviour, Thou loving Father, and grant that we may, each of us, be conscious that we stand in the mercy of God—not in our own righteousness, though Thou art evermore seeking that, but in Thine own generosity, in Thy love, in Thy healing nature, in that atmosphere of grace which issues from Thee, and in which we live and move and have our being.

May we stand, to-day, strong in God, and rejoice in the

Lord, and be filled with His presence and with His spirit. May each one in the strife which he wages against the natural man trust in Thee. Encased is our better part in these opaque bodies. We are warped and biased by hunger, by thirst, by fatigue, by every reaction and thrall of the flesh when tempted, by desires, by appetites. We are constantly cast hither and thither in spite of reason and in spite of our resolutions; and we find ourselves lying on the ground when we would soar far above the earth.

We pray that Thou wilt help all who struggle—with over-ruling pride, some; with all the weakness of vanity, some; with exhausting selfishness, some; with love of gain and avarice, some; and with the lust and appetite of pleasure, some. Strengthen us in our varied circumstances to maintain the battle for holiness, for purity, for all those things that shall ally us to God, who loves us, and to the hope of immortality.

We pray that Thou wilt comfort any who are mourning and whose hearts bleed; all the children of sacred sorrow; all those that carry in themselves the whole of their life unseen of men, unspoken and unknown.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt be near to the young, and open to them the way of honour and heroism in things noble and manly.

Be, we beseech of Thee, with those who work in the heat of the day and are active in life, that they may from noble motives achieve good things for themselves and for others. We beseech of Thee that they may carry the spirit of truth, honesty, fair dealing, charity, kindness, and fellowship into their intercourse with their fellow-men. May they not gnash upon others with their teeth, the strong beating down the weak, and the wise overreaching the simple. May they carry out the Word of the Lord in practice, and not promote turmoil and conflict and strife of

life. May they know that the battle which they are waging is a battle to maintain themselves in prosperity from the highest and best reasons.

We pray that Thou wilt grant strength unto the aged and infirm, and may their declining steps be steps of rejoicing. To-day, and evermore, may the gate stand open, as they draw near to the heavenly city; and as they leave something of the savour and sight of the world behind them, may there be wafted to them something of the aroma of the world to come, and the eye of the soul see clearer and clearer as the bodily eye grows dim.

And so gather us all at last. Through many paths travelling towards the same city may we meet in the heavenly land, cleansed, purified, ennobled, crowned with joy; and we will cast our crowns at Thy feet, blessed Saviour, saying, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be all the praise and the glory, for ever and ever." Amen.

a.

XXXV.

We cannot rise, our Father, into Thy presence. It must be Thy power and Thy life that come to us. By the descent of the Holy Ghost we receive life and light and impulse; and, lifted up by Thy Spirit, we may be borne above our life of the flesh, and may come into the outskirts of that bright Light which no man can look upon in the full blaze of its glory. And so we ask Thee, to-night, to gather into our thoughts and imaginations the images and suggestions of the Divine purity and truth and goodness, and to fill our minds, according to their measure, with a sense of Thy greatness and sovereignty in sympathy and mercifulness. We rejoice that Thou hast set Thine hand, in ways that we know not,—in a mystery of providence,—against all iniquity and against all suffering. We

rejoice that, while the world groans and travails in pain until now, Thou art not indifferent, and that the remedy is not left to accident, but that Thou hast compassion upon it, and art the Deliverer; and that in Thine own way and in Thine own time, Thou wilt bring forth a royal victory out of all evil, and out of all sorrow.

And now, though we cannot take in the whole of Thy being, nor understand by any searching what is the vastness of Thy relation, or the mode of Thy thought, or the depth of Thy love, yet we do understand, and can interpret in our own souls, what is the quality of the Divine affection. We know not its force, we know not its compass, we know not its fruitfulness; and yet something of it we have learned. Thou hast in a measure written it in our experience. Our best things do interpret Thee; but Thou art abundant in goodness and truth beyond any conception that we are able to form. We are as little children who, looking upon their fathers, know them as far as they know anything, but do not take in the whole of them. We look up to Thee, and yet we are not able to take in all of Thy being. But we understand something of it and rejoice in it. And may our hearts, even in our ignorance, be glad; for Thou art even now, to our thinking, glorious in holiness and fearful in praises; and if the imperfect vision which we have of Thee is but as the twilight compared with the full-orbed glory of the sun, what must Thy glory be? And now, O Lord, draw us unto Thyself. May we be made happy in the thought that the universe is controlled, not by any demoniac influence, but by Thee. Thou art God; Thou fillest the heavens and the earth; and we rejoice that in the sovereign power of Thy love all things are working together for good to them that love Thee. May we realize that this is the genius of creation; so that we may rejoice in our God alway. Though we do not see the reason of the storm, or of the trouble, may we believe that Thou

dost; and that Thou art not asleep when Thou seemest to slumber; and that Thou dost not lay aside Thy power when Thou art quiescent; but that when Thou dost exert Thy will upon the turbulence of the winds and waves, they shall obey Thee.

We trust in Thee. We rejoice in Thee. We desire more and more to be children of love; more and more to have purged out from us all the evils of the flesh; more and more to dwell in the full fruition of the Spirit. Multiply in us all gracious tendencies, and take away from us all temptations, or give us victory over them. Deliver us from fear and from the sense of guilt. Deliver us from all doubt and darkness. Bring us near to Thee that we may feel ourselves the children of God by adoption in Jesus Christ. May we have the witness of Thy Spirit that we are the sons of God. May we have evidence in ourselves that our sins are forgiven, that we are reconciled to Thy Name, and that Thy face shines out upon every trouble clearer than the morning after a night of storm. And so make Thyself as precious to us as Thou art powerful. Make Thyself as beautiful to us as Thou art good. Draw us by the bands of love, and keep us near to Thee by all those affections and graces which Thou dost work in us.

We pray that Thou wilt hear the cry of every troubled heart. Every heart knows its own bitterness. Every one does not know why he suffers; every one does not know the secret of the dealings of God with him; yet may every one be able to trust in the Lord, not knowing why it is as it is. May we accept Thy providence day by day; and when we have with all our wisdom, and all our skill, and all our strength, sought to work out things as we would have them, and we are overruled, may we accept it as a revelation of Thy will, and wait still further for the unfolding of Thy providence.

Comfort all those who are sad, all those who are sorrow-

ful, all those who are suffering in any way. We pray that Thou wilt give light to those that are in perplexity, and doubt, and darkness, and restraint. Draw near to those who are vehemently tempted. Deliver from their wickedness those who seek to tempt others. We pray that the net may be spread in vain in the sight of the bird. May it escape from all the snares of the fowler.

And may Thy will be done in this congregation to the honour and glory of Thy name.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

a.

XXXVI.

We give thanks to Thee, our Father, that we are brought together again. We thank Thee for the blessings of the day; for the mercies of evening; for the hope, for the forelooking, and for the inspiration of God. And we pray that Thou wilt grant that our goodness may not be as the cloud and the dew, passing quickly, nor as the seed upon the earth and upon the rock. Grant that we may be led by a hearty repentance of sin, and by an earnest faith in Thee and Thy Gospel, into the new and living way, that the power of God may rest and abide upon us, and that we may be the children of God and heirs with Jesus Christ to all the inheritance of Thy glory. We pray that Thou wilt grant that the light of the other life may chase away the darkness of this; that the wisdom which is from above may purge out the ignorance which we have; that the purity and goodness of God may cleanse us from the stain and spot of sin. May we be Thine, not in name merely, but in reality. May we be Thine in heart and in nature, transformed by grace, and in purity, not only made to be sons, but enabled to behold Thee, as the pure in heart shall see God. We pray that Thou wilt grant to us more and more a desire, not to build ourselves up, not to call

ourselves wise, or strong, or rich, in that which pertains to this world; but, whatever else we may have, whatever joys may smile upon us, for the grace of God, the favour of the Lord Jesus Christ, the indwelling of the Spirit of God, that we may be made men in Christ Jesus. And we pray that Thou wilt grant to us more and more a knowledge of the right way to overcome every besetting sin. Help us to break away from evils and infirmities. May it be a greater concern to us that we are Thine than that we are accomplished without. May we not seek to make ourselves acceptable before men; may we rather seek to make ourselves acceptable in the eyes of the all-seeing God. May it be the deepest wish of our hearts that, surrounded with all the experiences of evil, we may live that life of freedom and joy which Thou dost grant unto those who are wholly Thine. So give us a foretaste of the heavenly life, even in this world; and may we be patient here under tribulation May we be vigilant on every side; and yet may we rest in the Lord. Grant that there may be fulfilled to us all those promises of Thy word which have been fulfilled in generations past to so many that have been gathered from the earth and harvested and garnered in the heavenly land; and may our hearts be there with theirs. May our treasure be in heaven. May our thoughts of those that have gone before not be thoughts of distress to us. May we chide our untimely grief. May we rather look up toward the way in which they went, and by faith in Christ reach unto them, and rejoice, whatever storms may break upon us, that they are at rest, and that we are near to them, and coming nearer every day. Thus sanctify our bereavements. Thus grant us strength by Thy power even in the midst of seemingly overwhelming evil.

And we pray that Thy blessing may rest upon the households that are here represented; upon those that are strangers among us; upon all that are in darkness; upon

the outcast. We pray that there may spring up in Christian hearts a remembrance of those that are neglected and needy and for whose souls no men do care. We pray that men may be delivered from selfishness, and from pride, and from carnal appetites, and from mere worldliness, and that their natures may be deepened in the conception of things spiritual and divine. And more and more grant that the Gospel may have free course to run and be glorified in our midst.

We pray that Thou wilt shield the young from temptations. May they behold the snares that are planted for their feet, and avoid them. May they not listen to the guileful solicitation of pleasure. May they become more and more filled with virtue and true godliness. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt prosper them in the way of life. Grant them the bounty of Thy providence. Grant that to them this treasure may overtop all others.

We pray for Thy blessing upon all the Churches of this city, and upon the works by which they seek to acknowledge and glorify the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. Grant Thy blessing upon the efforts which are made everywhere for the reformation of morals and for the re-establishment of the industry, thrift, and virtue of those who are fallen; and grant that knowledge may run to and fro throughout our whole land, and that this may be Immanuel's land.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

a.

XXXVII.

O LORD our God, we rejoice in the manifestations of Thyself which are made in heaven, and on earth among men. We rejoice that with ripening knowledge Thou art growing more glorious in holiness and more fearful in praise;

and that Thou dost fill the soul. Yet Thou art not known; and no man hath yet laid the line upon Thy being, or searched Thee out unto perfection; and Thou standest in light unapproachable. No man can measure Thee or define Thee. We can make mention of those things in Thee which are glorious, but none hath brought forth the treasure of Thy being, none hath given it proportion, and none hath made manifest what is the amplitude and wonder of glory, and goodness, and wisdom in Thee. Thou standest apart from all other things and beings, in Thine own individuality and personality, before the minds of men; for there is not that scope in us yet which can take thee in—not even afar off. What are we that dance before Thee as motes in the sunbeam? What are we that are as a clod, or as the dust which springs from it? We pray that we may have some such sense of the grandeur of Thy nature as shall cause us to hold ourselves without pride before Thee and with the docility of children; and that we may be more and more brought into Thy likeness.

Grant unto us, in the thought of Thy greatness and goodness, a refuge; for how little are we before the ages! How little are we before the manifestation of power in nature! How little in the currents of human life! How little is the utmost stretch of our power in the midst of those influences which draw us, and lift us up, or cast us down! And how much less are we before the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, and the Omnipresent! O Lord, may we feel, therefore, in our littleness and weakness, how good and gracious a thing it is that Thou art our Sun, our Shield, our Fortress, our Strength, our Leader, our Deliverer, the Author and the Finisher of our faith! May we take refuge in Thee. May we feel as children that run from outward danger homeward, and into the presence of their parents.

We pray, especially, that Thou wilt grant to Thy servants, this morning, who have need of the overshadowing of God, that sensibility to Divine things by which they may avail themselves of that which is prepared, and which waits for their taking. May all those who are sick, or who have been, and are yet, weary with weakness, feel what God may be to them—how patient, how gentle, how wholesome, how healing. May all those who are in sorrow rise to the thought of the pity of the Divine nature—for sorrow is not to Thee what it must be to us, or Thou wouldst run often to us, as we do to our sorrowing children. Yet we know that many things that make them weep make us smile. We strive to harden them to bear things which are needful to their manhood; and dost Thou not look upon all the varied scenes of life, our Father, and see how many things are blessings which we moan as curses; and how many things are necessary disciplines which we avoid as if they were temptations or overmastering disasters? If Thou dost smile when we sorrow, it is not because Thou carest not, but because Thou seest how good the blossom is which shall come out of the thorn-bearing bush of experience. Grant that we may rise into some such sense of Thy fidelity and of Thy mercifulness as shall enable us to look at our varied afflictions as Thou dost. And those who, in worldly circumstances, find themselves shaken out of their fortresses, whose foundations are suddenly sunken under them, and who are swept as the rolling down before the whirlwind—we pray that they may know what is the fulness and the sweetness of Thy command to lay up treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, where thieves do not break through, and where bankruptcies never come. And grant, since we have faith in the redemption of Jesus Christ, since we are all of us as shadows here seeking substance by-and-by, since we are strangers and pilgrims, and yet sons of God, unknown and un-

crowned, but going toward our Father's house, since there are no treasures here that do not perish in the using, and since there are endurable riches of righteousness in Thy kingdom waiting for us,—O grant that since these things are so we may not take our measures with our eyes looking downward. May we look at the stars and take our measures from thence. Like men who upon the deep look upward to learn wisdom by which to thrust their ships across the sea, may we look up into the heavenly places and draw down wisdom by which to guide ourselves in the infirmities, and embarrassments, and troubles of this mortal life. May we have a manhood that shall shake off trouble. Or, if we may not shake off trouble, may we have an endurance that can carry it. Or, if we may not have endurance to carry it, grant that we may have faith by which we can lay it upon Thee. For Thou carest for us. Teach us to be childlike, hearing Thee say, *I know all things, and all things shall work together for thy good.* Teach us to take Thee at Thy word; to rest in the Lord; to rest by day, and to rest by night. As the fowls of the sea, that sit singing in the night upon the tossing ocean, and are not afraid, knowing that in a moment they can mount upward and escape the toil and the wave-stroke; so may we be ever ready to lift ourselves above the darkness and the night, and into the air where the light dwells.

Teach us day by day, that we may teach others, humbling us, softening us, enriching us, and giving us the unconscious power of goodness, that we may not seek ourselves nor serve ourselves, nor be led away by our own violent zeal and intemperate ambitions, but that we may walk as the children of God in all humility and in all goodness one toward another, fulfilling the law of love.

We pray for Thy blessing to rest upon all the families of this congregation; upon each individual member; and upon all the children that are scattered away from their

homes. Wherever they are, may they have the presence of God perpetually round about them, to guide them, to guard them, and to keep them in integrity. We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to all those who need counsel, and to all that must give counsel; to all those that teach, and to all that are taught; to all those that labour in lowly ways and places, and to all that are raised on high and placed in authority; to all men in all conditions. Glorify Thyself by Thy people, and by the whole world, and make haste to bring in Jew and Gentile to one fellowship, to bring in all nations, and to make them one in Christ Jesus.

And to Thy Name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

a.

XXXVIII.

We come into Thy presence with thanksgiving and praise for what Thou art, and for such disclosure as Thou hast made of Thyself unto us. We do not abide perpetually in the sacred vision; but when Thou art unfolded to us, and transfigured, we behold, wistfully, wondering, and even abashed, yet longing to abide still where Thou art. But Thou sendest us down from the mountain-top into life where are troubles, where are duties hard and onerous, and where men need our ministration. It is not here that we are to abide with Thee. It is not here that we are to seek our rest. It is not here that we are crowned. We are warriors girded about with armour, and doing the will of our Commander, looking for our coronation and rest in the land that is beyond. And we thank Thee that it is near. It seems at times very far off; and, full of delay, our days move heavily. We look wistfully for that rest which remaineth for the people of God; and yet Thou, O God of life and of love, knowest best, and art administer-

ing all things for our good. We pray that our reason may not interpret Thee, and that we may not believe only so far as we see and discern. May we have that faith which leans upon Thee, and says, Though He slay me, I will trust Him.

We pray, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt accept our confession of sin, and our supplication for grace to help against all temptation and evil. We pray that we may be built up in Thee, that we may rest in Thee, that we may be strong in the Lord, and rejoice in the Lord; and so may we walk on earth with Thee, if not in beatific vision, yet in strength, in trust, and in comfort. Be Thou to us the needed food. Be Thou to us the all-quenching water of life, with which thirst cannot live. Be Thou our Saviour, Thy rod and Thy staff—may they comfort us. Quell our fear. Take away all faint-heartedness, all despondency, all weariness. Fill us with such a sense of Thy presence that we shall feel that Thou art all in all, standing over against every need, and drawing near to us in every hour of necessity. So may we live, looking unto the Author and the Finisher of our faith.

Bless, we pray Thee, all who are gathered together to-night in Thy sacred presence. Oh! give to them a sense of their strength and their riches in God. How poor are we in ourselves! How are we tossed about in life! But we are strong in Thee. We are lifted above the fear of man, we are lifted above the temptations that are incident to our lower life, when we live in the full disclosure of Thy countenance, and in the joy of Thy salvation.

Grant, we beseech Thee, to every one in Thy presence this greatest treasure of the soul—that they may see Thee. Thou art fairer than all that are fair; brighter than all brightness; better than all goodness; and we pray that Thou wilt minister to longing hearts the sense of God present with them. So may those that have sought Thee

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long find Thee more and more apparently; and may those that have turned their back upon Thee, and gone in the ways of sin and selfishness, hear Thy voice calling to them, and feel Thy hand turning them about ere it be too late.

We pray that Thou wilt make Thy truth powerful. May it arouse slumbering men. May it encourage all that are seeking the way of life. May it strengthen those that are making the journey of earth.

Deliver us, we pray Thee, during the week upon which we have entered, from all the temptations which are incident to our outward life. We pray that we may live, not by sight, but by faith. Grant that while our feet do yet tread this earth our head may be above it, and in the realm of the invisible. Give us that sight of the soul by which we should, amongst familiar things in this world, have the ministration of things in the world that is to come.

We pray that we may be more faithful in our households, and more faithful in our business. May we be diligent in business and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

So we pray, O God, that Thou wilt continue to do us good, leading us as a father leads his child, and building us up in the most holy faith until life is over—until life is begun. And oh, grant that we may draw near to the departing hour with exceeding great joy, as exiles that are embarking for home, as prisoners that hear the doors open that shall lead them out. And so, dying, may we pass beyond and out of sight, to go home and appear in Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads.

And to the Father, the Son and Spirit shall be praises evermore. Amen.

a.

XXXIX.

WE rejoice, our Heavenly Father, in that name which we are taught from our childhood to address unto Thee; for

though Thou art supreme and dost govern all things by the word of Thy power; and though Thou art sovereign, yet Thou hast taught us to know that Thou art our life, and from our affection for our children we have been led to call Thee ours. Thou art our Father; and we rejoice in all the inward thought and association of love which goes with that blessed name. Thou art our Father; and as our Father Thou art more tender, more gracious, more longsuffering and more abundant in goodness than earthly parents can by their nature be: but we are stained with faults; we are veined with pride and with selfishness; we are bound by weariness, by occupation, by ten thousand distractions; and we go with unequal steps and with unbalanced souls through all the best part of our lives. Thou, however, art never disturbed, but carriest Thyself the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, without variableness or shadow of turning. Thy moods are everlastingly wise and good and constant. All things are under Thy supreme control; and we rejoice that such is the government to which we come. From all the hardness of the world around us, from all those laws and governments which compel brute matter, we retreat, and enter into the warmth and the glory of that other government which pertains to the soul; and we desire to stand as the children of God in our own consciousness, in our own affection, and in our own voluntary choice, that we may be governed as Thou dost govern Thine own children and Thine own self, and that we may thus become heirs of God with Jesus Christ.

We pray for every one that is in Thy presence. We pray for all those who now consciously have need of Thee, and for all who need Thee day by day; for in Thee we live and move and have our being. But, at times, the clouds are dark, the storm is out, and the sea is tumultuous. At times, we are made painfully conscious of our need of Thee. There are those in Thy presence who feel deeply their dependence

upon Thee, and are crying out for succour and for help. Be pleased, Almighty God, out of Thy goodness and kindness, to greet them, this morning, not so much with that which they ask, as with that which they need. Do by every one of us as we do by our children. We give to them the things which our experience teaches us are best for them; and we pray that Thou wilt overrule us when, in childish ignorance, we ask for things that are not best for us. Yet is it not best that we should see Thee? Is it not best that we should have a consciousness of Thy presence? Is it not best that we should have faith and certitude of God's government within and without?

We pray, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt grant to us that blessing which is the sum of all blessings—the blessing of Thyself. We ask not that we may be able to comprehend the whole of Thy being, but that we may have a sense that Thou art, and that Thou art the Rewarder of those that diligently seek Thee; that we may not be discouraged, and seem to ourselves as men who throw petitions upon the empty air.

We beseech Thee to grant Thy presence to those who are in afflictions. Comfort them, and grant that their troubles may be so sanctified as that they themselves shall become comforters of others who are in like troubles. Oh, grant that, in this world, where wayfaring men are overtaken with so much calamity, one may sustain another, and that we may walk together, the strong bearing the weak, and all succouring all.

We pray Thee to bless all the households that are represented in this congregation. If there be sorrow in any of them, may it be a sacred sorrow. As a night full of stars may it be. Grant that all discords may be cast away, that all divisions and alienations may be healed, and that the household may be to every one of us as the very gate of heaven.

May Thy kingdom come, in all its forms and developments. May the men prosper by whom intelligence is to make itself felt throughout the world, and may every endeavour, conscious or unconscious, for the refinement of men, and for their exaltation from animals to manhood, be owned and blessed of Thee; and may the day speedily come when the knowledge of the Lord shall be as wide as the bounds of the globe, and Thy kingdom shall extend from the rising of the sun until the going down of the same.

Look with favour upon Thy servants who have presented their child to Thee this morning, and who have consecrated it to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of their brethren. Bless the little one. Grant that its life on earth may be pleasing in Thy sight, for its parents' sake; and may they be so endued with wisdom and faith and hope that they shall be able to rear the child for Christ; and may it grow up in honour, and truth, and honesty, and fidelity, and piety.

O God, remember all the dear children that belong to us. Grant that the little ones may find worthy examples in their parents. May they be early borne, as it were, in the arms of faith, to the Lord Jesus Christ. And wilt Thou take them into Thine arms, and lay Thine hands upon them, and bless them. Grant, we pray Thee, that the generation that is growing up in our midst may be more worthy to bear the name of Christ than we have been; and may there be, from generation to generation, going forth from this place, those who shall make known Jesus Christ in His glory and power for the salvation of men.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen. *a.*

XL.

How shall we draw near to Thee whom we cannot comprehend, O Thou Unknown? Thou who, by Thy greatness,

Thy goodness, and Thy purity dost so far transcend anything that we have on earth, we have no measure wherewith to measure Thee, and no experience and no thought by which we can climb up unto Thee; and we need that Thou shouldst imbosom Thyself in things material, and pour into us something of the knowledge of Thyself, though imperfect, by the things which we understand So Thou hast taught us to say, "Our Father which art in heaven." Heaven is the home and the household of the soul. Something of Thee we know; for we have had parents, and our home looms up in the past full of brightness and gladness; and heaven is our Father's house. Oh, how glorious, how wonderful, past finding out, is this refuge of universal being! Thou art our Father, clothed with a power illimitable, and with a wisdom of which we have only the faintest thought; but oh, with what height and depth, what length and breadth of goodness! And all this is ours. Because we are Thy children, and because Thou hast taught us to say, "Our Father," we claim Thee, and come boldly to Thee. We are not afraid of Thee, though we have abundant reason to fear. Love casts out fear; and we draw near to Thee as Thy children. And this morning we rejoice in our parentage. We rejoice in all the blessedness of adoption by which we are enabled to say, "Father," with every thought, by the upward lifting of our very soul.

May the thought of God be a benediction to every soul here to-day. Give to every one rest; for if Thou givest peace, who can take it away? Give to every one inward life, and cast out from every one fear and sorrow. If Thou hast sent trouble to any, may it complete its work in righteousness, and issue in joy. May those who have been bowed down by burdens find silently gathering under these burdens strength to carry them until they shall cease to be burdensome. To those who are in grief and bereavement, and whose very thoughts and fancies all flow in sadness,

grant the light of Thy countenance, the visitation of Thy Spirit, the Comforter. Oh, when Thou comfortest, who can be sorry? As a mother quiets the child that wakes at night in fear and with outcry, and lifts it into her own bosom, and makes it happy even in its dreams, so how much more canst Thou make the soul happy which is caught up in the arms of Thy promises, and held near to the warmth of Thy heart and made to understand something of the blessedness of God, and of one's self in God!

If any are in perplexity, wilt Thou, who givest liberally to those that lack wisdom, Thou that upbraidest not, grant that they may in Thy light see light. If petitions are easily made and not soon answered, grant that every one may know how to wait upon God, and how in patience to possess his soul, knowing that time works out answers, and that Thou dost not give, as men do, from hand to hand: that Thou stirrest us up by Thy Spirit, and dost, by the culture of the soul, bring out for us the answers that are most profitable unto us. May we know how to be patient and to wait, and to ask continually without disappointment if no visible answer comes. May we be sure of Thy love and of Thy ministering care, and of Thy Divine providence day by day, overarching every one. So may we find in the thought of Thy faithfulness all that we need to guide, to encourage, to comfort, to strengthen us. If there be those who are seeking to find access to Thee that they may discern something of the form of Thy face, and know whether Thou art frowning or smiling, we beseech of Thee that they may see God. May they cast out selfishness and pride and every malign feeling; may they disclose in themselves the power of true charity and gentleness and love; and in those moods may they look up to Thee, who art eternally joyful and glad in the eyes of those who are joyful and glad in Thee. We pray that the hard way of reason may not be the way our souls shall follow. May we follow Thee according to Thine own

word—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. May we live by that which is best in us—by our noblest thought and feeling; and day by day may we count it no hardship that we must needs deny the flesh and its lusts and appetites for the sake of the spirit, and of its purity and glory and power. Let not the world have dominion over us. May we not hear its voice, whether it threaten, or whether it charm never so cunningly. May we hear in the silence above us and around us the voice of God. Grant that we may be comforted by that voice evermore saying to us, Be not afraid. It is I. This is the way: walk ye in it. Whom I love I chasten. Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world; ye shall overcome.

And so in this Divine companionship may we walk, patiently waiting for the great disclosure when the veil shall be lifted, when to the dust again shall go the hindering dust, and we shall see Thee as Thou art, and be like Thee.

Vouchsafe Thy blessing, we pray Thee, to all that are present with us to-day—strangers in a strange land, or far from home and kindred. May they in sympathy be one with us and, at the same throne, with the same necessities, may they feel that they are in brotherhood, and that this is the soul's home on earth—the house of God. If they are far away from all that is dear to them, let their backward-running thoughts carry the blessing of God with them.

Be with all that are near and dear to us, whether they are in this land, upon the deep, or in foreign lands. Wherever they are, they are not far from Thee. How very small is the world which Thou carriest in Thine hand! And they who are seemingly far from us are close by us.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon all, to-day, who are round about us, ministering in the name of Christ, and preaching the unsearchable riches of the Gospel of Christ. May they understand in their own souls what they preach; may it be transformed into the spirit of

living men; and then may it be given forth as the inspiration of God in them. We pray that the Churches may be profited by the ministrations of Thy servants their pastors; and may Thy word be more and more plainly and powerfully preached in these cities. And we beseech of Thee that multitudes may be gathered from their evil ways and brought into the ways of righteousness.

May Thy kingdom come in all our land and in all the lands of the earth. Hasten the day when nations shall vex each other no more, when knowledge shall expel ignorance, and when, ignorance dying, superstition shall perish with it.

Grant that liberty may come; and therefore may knowledge lead the way. May men be too strong for manacles and too large for imprisonment. May despotism cease by the uprising and glorious strength of all the race. Oh, may men know Thee, and serve Thee, and find that liberty wherewith Thou makest Thy people free.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. Amen.

a.

XLI.

OUR Father, already Thou hast made it needless to invoke Thee. That we are here, is because Thou hast been before us, and hast blessed the morning, and caused the light of the other life to dawn upon this twilight of ours, where we grope, seeking we scarcely know what, and mourning we scarcely know why. Equipped with royal power, our whole life runs through mistakes, and each day chides the day that is past. We strive, and gain but little. We sink, and are contented with base things, for days ignoble and forgetful. We feel again the sacred fire; Thine eye finds us; we are aroused; we look up; and rebuking ourselves with the truth, and despising ourselves, we reach out feeble hands, and with outcry we seek to climb to heaven again; and we do

sometimes behold the beatific vision. Alas! that it should be along any other than the living Way—Jesus Christ. Thou dost often lead us Thyself; but often it is the cry of our little children, who have gone before us, that leads us up. Much oftener it is our fathers and mothers that invoke us; and we find Thee because we are heart-sick for them. It is our sadness and our sorrow that help us heavenward; and yet, Thou knowest, Lord, that Thou too art glorious in our eyes, and at times unspeakably beautiful; and all that is to be desired in friendship is more than met in Thee; and all our earthly wants do wither in Thy presence; and we feel effluent, glorious, in the light of Thy goodness and glory: and we are filled with sacred peace, and a certainty of joy, both now and to come. And yet, how soon the vision ends! and how easily we fall back into night! and then come those surging days, and the darkness of the soul. We wonder if Thou art, and if we have ever beheld Thee. And then we ask for bodily signs, and wish that we could hear Thy voice, or see some form, or lay our hands upon Thy side or upon Thy brow. And again Thou liftest us up out of the dominion of the flesh. Again we find our emancipated thoughts going for ever toward Thee.

O Lord, we pray that there may be given to us some steadfastness, that these changes and perturbations may cease, and that we may have such a hold by faith upon Thee that we shall all day long rest in the Lord.

We pray for that manifestation of Thyself which shall be suitable to each one, according to his need. We pray for those who are feeble-minded. Deal gently with those who are in sorrow. O Lord, Thou who hast been the Comforter of the ages, be Thou gracious unto them in all their affliction. Whatever Thou dost take away from them, take not Thyself away.

We pray that Thou wilt be gracious to all those that are tempted, and that are in a doubtful strife with evil. Give

them vigour, and the vision of faith, and the weapons thereof, and the sensible presence of God in the soul.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessings unto all those to whom life seems a burden—to all those who live that they may suffer. Grant to them such sustaining grace that at last they shall, with Thy servant of old, learn how to rejoice in infirmities, if thereby the faith and the grace of Christ may be made manifest in their mortal bodies.

We pray that Thou wilt grant to all of us the disposition to meet the thing that is in to-day with a vigour of patience that shall enable us triumphantly to meet anything that is in to-morrow. May we not look anxiously forward to cares that belong to days that are to come. Thou hast never forsaken us, and why should we doubt Thee? How often have our sins been overcome? with what fear do we come to Thee in the consciousness of sin! How often have we been strengthened of Thee! How often does it seem to us uncertain whether we shall be succoured! How have our fears been laughed to scorn by Thy providence! And yet, what dominion have our fears over us!

O Lord our God, we pray that we may have a commensurate sense of Thy goodness, of Thy graciousness, of Thy nearness to us, and of Thy helpfulness. May we believe that with Thee it is more blessed to give than to receive. And so may we rest in the Lord, and press forward with a song that shall banish sighs.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon all the households of this congregation. May Thy servants that minister as parents to their children be made wise at Thine hand; and not only may they teach them lessons of virtue, but may they walk therein. And so, being guides to their children, may they be themselves guided.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon Thy servants in our midst who go forth to our schools and missions, and who in ways of kindness visit the outcast,

those that are in prison, the sick and the needy, and gather together the poor and the ignorant to clothe them and to instruct them. We pray that they may have more and more of the very Spirit of the Master, and become abler exponents of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt bless this Church. Grant unto it a continuance of Thy presence—the very abiding influence of Thy Spirit.

May Thy servants who are providentially in our midst, called of Thee in Thy providence for Thy work, be greatly blessed of God in their own souls. May they be brought very near to a sense of heaven, and to a vision of Divine glory. If they are in affliction, comfort them severally; and with the consolation with which they are comforted may they comfort others who are in trouble. Grant that their households, in their absence, may be under the very covert of Thy wing. We pray for their parishes and various spheres of labour; and will the Lord prepare them here to go back, themselves blessed, and carry blessings with them. We pray for the enlargement of their souls toward Jesus Christ. We ask for them a more eminent faith, and a zeal more entirely purified by love. And though their power may be augmented with growing years, may they have growing grace.

We beseech Thee to bless all Thy Churches, and all Thy servants that minister in them, and may their labours be crowned with great success this day.

And so may Thy Name be glorious—the Name that is above every other name, dearest to us.

Grant, we pray Thee, that the name of Jesus may be heard in every language and in every place on the earth, and that there may be in it a power to exorcise wickedness, and that shall go forth bearing health to the souls of men. May Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen. *a.*

XLII.

O THOU God of glory and of joyfulness, why is it that the world hath rolled in darkness and in trouble? Why has it groaned and travailed in pain until now? Is it an orphan? Is it a culprit world? Hast Thou shot it forth out of Thy remembrance, and appointed its bound in the twilight far away from Thee, where no sound shall come of heavenly harmony, but discord only, and where there shall be no shining of the Divine light? We rejoice that the earth is not forgotten of Thee: that it is dear unto Thee: and that though it is a mystery to us, it is a mystery whose unfolding shall be mightier for joy, and for confidence, and for gladness than anything that it enters into the heart of man to conceive. We feel how ignorant and how helpless we are in attempting to understand the scheme of God throughout the realm of the universe. We are overmeasured and overmastered continually: and if it were not for the witness of Thy Spirit in ours that Thou art, and that Thou art a rewarder of all those that diligently seek Thee, our very faith, our life itself would flee away, and we should sit in the wilderness withered and utterly hopeless; but Thou bearest witness with our spirit that we are Thy children; and we behold the developments of Thy thought and of Thy will in all the realm round about us; and we know that it presages something larger and better than anything that we have perceived thus far, and that the glory of Thine unfolding, and the final revelation of the truth as it is in God and in Christ Jesus, shall surpass all expectation. It hath not yet entered into the heart of man to conceive of the things which Thou hast laid up for those that love Thee.

And now we pray, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt grant this morning, that there may dawn in our midst, if not the brightness of the heavenly realm, yet the golden twilight which comes from the light of the throne, that mixes with

our atmosphere. Give us such aspiration, such perception, such gladness, such realization of unity with Thee, such a sense that we belong to the general assembly and to the Church of the First-born, such a communion of the saints, such a blending of our whole life with the life that rolls in thundering joy above our head, that we shall be lifted into the fulness of the gladness that is for Thy people.

We pray that Thou wilt grant to all those in Thy presence such an influence as they need. Thou art taking care of this world, that does not know Thee; Thou art calling life out of death everywhere, and clothing the earth with beauty; and wilt Thou not be as gracious to Thy servants as Thou art to the flowers of the field? Wilt Thou not do by the heart as much as Thou wilt do by the soil? Shine, we pray Thee, Thou Spirit of all bounty and love, upon the hearts of Thy children everywhere, and give to them that joy of God which shall supplant whatever is unlovely in them, or overlay it with the shining of Thy nature. As the things most homely and coarse out of doors, to-day—things that are dead, even,—when the sun falls upon them become beautiful in its light, so Thou canst make all things—even fear, and sorrow, and doubts, and bereavements—bright with the inshining of Thy heart, Thy light, and Thy truth; and, rejoicing, may every one cast away whatever intrudes between his soul and Christ. May every one forsake vain repinings, and seek no more to interpose offices and symbols between himself and the Saviour. Give to every one to-day a joyful and personal communion with Thyself—the blessing which is above all other blessings.

And so may we advance from day to day and from year to year, gloriously shortening the road that lies before us at every step, until we shall stand in Zion and before God. And then we will ask for no more. Amen.

XLIII.

WE thank Thee, our Father, for the sun that hath come to tell us again of the bounty of God, wide-shining, not alone upon the earth but everywhere, not according to the measure of the need of Thy creatures, but according to its own royal overflow, enough, and transcendently more than enough. Were there more worlds that dwelt in light, there would be enough for them all for evermore. Thou art the Sun of Righteousness; and in the greatness of Thy thought, in the greatness of Thy love and of Thy mercy toward us that are poor and needy, we have no measure of Thee. There is no thought that can rise to the grandeur of the fulness of the Divine nature. And when we are touched by Thine outshining, when our souls feel even in the least degree the impulse of Thy soul, we are lifted up, and are strange to ourselves, and almost lose thought of custom, of law, and of things familiar, and walk as men in a dream of joy; and because it subsides so soon we fear that it is phantasy; yet, O Lord, must we be for evermore so unfamiliar with Thee as not to know the impulse of Thy heart upon ours—the knocking of Thy soul at the door of our souls?

We come, this morning, to pray that we may feel ourselves to be more the children of God; that we may have more knowledge of how to lift ourselves up into the very atmosphere of God; that we may abide in Him, and so in power; that abiding in Him we may look upon all this lower life, necessary and yet low, as kings and priests in the heavenly host look down upon them. We pray for that power by which we shall become free from the thrall of life, and walk in an everlasting glory. Our days are troubled days. We sink into gulfs. We wander in the thicket and are torn. The way is hard; and panting and fainting we often sit down to take counsel with fear or

with death. Why, O Lord, should Thy children be so humbled into bondage, and be led by captivity, and be under the thrall of fear? Art not Thou the Deliverer? Wilt Thou suffer Thine own so to walk? Give to us, we pray Thee, that supernal light and that influence of life which shall increase our energy, so that we shall mount up as with wings; so that in all the royal way we shall travel without weariness.

Grant, we pray Thee, this morning, to every one in Thy presence the revelation of Thy presence and the consciousness of Thy great love to him. Call each one by his soul-name, so that he shall know himself to be known, and so that he shall know himself to be in the companionship of God. And make this to many and many a soul the gate of heaven—the gate of revelation, and of inspiration, and of power, and of hope, and of joy, and of blessing. We pray that in the light of Thy countenance every one of us may be able to look upon our sorrow, and discern what it is when it comes, and how it may be cured. Grant, O Lord, that we may know how to read the book of our own experience, and also to see in the disciplines to come only the true and the right way. May all of us learn how to rate at its true value the past, and how to take at their true value the things which are coming but that are not visible to our senses. So may this day be filled with all the fulness of the Godhead.

Grant, we pray Thee, O God, that those who sit in sorrow may find their sorrow struck through with heavenly comfort. May those who find themselves weak, and ready to give up the doubtful conflict, find themselves strong in the Lord; and may those of discontented hearts, to whom life has been sparing, and to whom mercies come in afflicting ways, have in themselves the interpreting of the Holy Ghost; that they may behold the hidden things of Thy providence, and understand better the ways of God to them.

We pray that we may each feel that we are strangers and pilgrims in this life; and, important as are our duties here, needful as the flesh and its institutions are for us, may we discern the higher life, the better world, the nobler service, and long for that which is better, and reach out our hands toward the city of our God.

We pray for Thy blessing to rest upon all that are present this morning—strangers from strange places, but all familiar to Thee. May the presence of God give to them the sense of coming home. May they join in prayer, in sacred songs, and in all the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as under their own Father's roof—for this is Thy home, Thou art their Father, they are Thy children; and may they have the children's portion to-day. And bless, we beseech of Thee, those whom they have left behind them. May their thoughts, their yearnings, and their memories of persons and things that are dear to them come up before Thee, Thou royal Giver, to whom it is in infinite ways more blessed to give than to receive. Do exceeding abundantly more for them every one than they can ask or think.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall be praises evermore. Amen.

a.

XLIV.

ASCENDED Saviour, Thou art not upborne in the heavenly land to forget Thine earth, and them that struggle upon it. We are surrounded by the winds that blow over our shifting life; we are subject to temptations more shrewd than our wisdom, and to assaults more vehement than we are able to overcome; and we are altogether in need of Divine wisdom and Divine strength; and we rejoice that Thou art the Head over all, to bring sons and daughters home to Zion; and that all who will accept Thy guidance and

Thy teaching shall surely escape the snare and avoid the peril, and shall be brought, in spite of all things adverse and malign of this world and the other, safely through the way of life, and to the seat of peace.

O Lord Jesus, we render Thee thanks for all that Thou hast made known to us of the nature of Thy Father, and of our Father; for all the truth which Thou hast spoken to us of what we are and what we ought to become; for all the things which Thou art sending by the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, upon men. Our hope is in Thee. Our desires are toward Thee. We seek, in ourselves and in our spheres, to become such as Thou wert when Thou didst walk upon the earth; for though we have not Thy power nor Thy knowledge, yet Thou wert not ashamed to call us brethren. We are Thy brothers, and we inherit something of Thy nature; and we long to be like Thee, and to have Thy favour and Thine approval, as well as Thy piety and Thine assistance.

We beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt accept our thanks for the many mercies of the summer. We have been wayfaring, and we have been preserved. We have been separated from our homes and kindred; and yet we have been in our Father's house; and Thou hast prospered us. Many have occasion to thank Thee for vigour restored, for hope of health, and for health itself. Thou hast spared our lives. Thou hast granted us personally and socially more mercies than we know how to name. Thou hast permitted us to come together, many of us, from Sabbath to Sabbath, here, and hast made this a tabernacle in the wilderness; and we have worshipped and rejoiced and dwelt together in harmony. Gathered from many different places, gathered from out of Churches of different names, gathered from among those that at home are not loving and do not mingle, Thou hast been pleased to give to us here Thy Spirit of charity, of forbearance and

of pure love to God which has harmonized us; and we have been without jar or disturbance, and without recriminations; and we have gone on in mutual esteem, and helped each other, and rejoiced in the communion of the saints, and been united invisibly in that higher communion which watches over us, and waits for us, and calls us incessantly, by night and by day, to come up thither. For these blessings accept our heart-felt thanks. And as we meet to-day for the last time of the year that is waning, grant that this may be a meeting of joy, and of hope, and of the fruition of the Spirit of God. And as, parting, we clasp hands, and go asunder, and walk in our various ways of life, may we go with our faces cheerful and radiant. May the light fall down upon us from the other world. And may we by-and-by be gathered again, one and another, and many coming in groups and bands, until all are gathered in that land of blessedness where we shall join inseparable hands, and where we shall be as the angels of God, and walk in the exaltation of purity and of joy for ever.

a.

XLV.

OUR Father in heaven, by that name we enter as through an open door into confidence, into love, and into hope. What in the goodness of Thy being Thou art we cannot discern. What Thou art in Thine absolute perfection we, limited, never can understand. Thou art past finding out. We rejoice, therefore, that Thou hast made Thyself known to us in Jesus Christ, interpreting something of the grandeur of Thy being into word and conduct and life such as we are accustomed to understand. Thou hast brought Thyself as near to us in Him as God can be brought to us. Grant that we may look through Him to the Eternal One. Grant that we may enter through Jesus Christ into

the love of God, and into fellowship with Him. May we learn Thy disposition from His disposition, Thy soul from His soul, and Thy works to us from His works to us. And grant that thus we may grow in grace by growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

O blessed Redeemer, we thank Thee for Thy ministration. We are witnesses of Thy faithfulness and Thy continued care. What is there in life that has not been made brighter to us by Thy love? What is there in all the troubles and sorrows which we go through that is not touched with the light of Thy hope and cheer? We have been sick, and Thou hast comforted us. We have been despondent, and upon us there has arisen light as in darkness. Sometimes Thou hast shone upon the fulness of our joy like the sun in its glory; and at other times Thou hast been the bright and the morning star; and always Thou hast been light and joy. Even when, in sight of Thy purity and goodness, our own sins have risen up over against Thee, and we have felt our selfishness, and untowardness, and pride, and envy, and our want of tenderness and gentleness and compassion, and the dominion in us of cruelty, and down-treading despotism; and even when we have been convicted and ashamed and cast down in our own sight, we have felt the tenderness of Thy mercy, the gentleness of Thy grace, the power of Thy love. Thou hast not been weary of us. Thou hast nourished us. Even as a nurse cares for her children, so dost Thou care for our souls in Thine infinite grace and goodness.

We make mention of Thy name and goodness not only because our hearts do praise Thee, but that others may know what medicine there is in Thee for them, and that faith may spring up in them, and that many may be drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ through hope and comfort of hope.

We pray for Thy blessing to rest upon all that are here present to-night. Grant, we pray Thee, that each one may be consciously near to Thee. May every heart have something of confession or of thanksgiving to utter. May every heart feel that the gift of God is about to be partaken of as freely as the air that is breathed. Grant that every one may be strong in the Lord, and rejoice in the Lord; and may we trust not in our own feeble, partial attainments, but in the righteousness which is of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that our life may be absorbed into Thy life. May it increase, that the life which we live may be by faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

And now grant that the word of truth to-night may be dispensed with simplicity and clearness and discrimination; and that it may find a way to the understanding, the consciousness, and the heart of every one.

Deliver us from evil. Lead us unto all good, and strengthen us therein. So long as we live, may we live walking steadfastly toward the heavenly gate, until at last we are permitted to lay down our burden, to go forth from this body, and to enter in and be for ever with the Lord.

And to Thy Name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be the praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

a.

XLVI.

WITHIN Thine house, O Lord, there rise to our thoughts memories of the thousand things for which we desire to give thanks. The days long gone by of joyful friendship, in labour, in songs, in prayer, and in sweet virtues; those that were among us, and are with Thee; the strifes and struggles of early life and of the years as they have rolled

on—how much have we in these for meditation and thanksgiving! If we consider the way of the Lord in the household, in our childhood, in the associations of youth, in the beginning of our life, in all the experiences that have brought us down to the present hour, how much cause have we for gratitude? What wonders have been wrought silently and without observation in each of us, that time shall not know, but that eternity will make known?

We desire this evening, O Lord God of our fathers, to remember Thy mercies with abundant thanksgiving and praise. We pray that Thou wilt help us day by day to be mindful, more than we have been, of our obligations to Thee, so that murmurs may not come from our lips; so that our sullen hearts may not sit in discontent; so that, even in the midst of trials themselves, we may find occasion for thanksgiving. Yea, like thy servants of old, who were fast in the prison, may we learn to sing songs in the night, and to find joy and gladness even in the prison-house.

We pray that Thou wilt grant to us, to-night, that inspiration by which all that is right in us shall be aroused, and all that is evil in us shall be repressed. May Thy word come home to us, and be a light to our path. May we seek wisdom. More than all other things, may we desire the wisdom which comes from a knowledge of God, and of His way with men.

We pray that Thou wilt grant us an earnest desire; not for outward strength, not for building ourselves up with outward prosperity, but so that the inward man of the soul shall be rich in all virtue, and manliness, and honour, and truth, and loyalty. We pray that we may have an abundance of knowledge—of that knowledge which shall not depart from us in age, and which shall be a joy, a light, a refuge, and a defence

We pray that Thou wilt bless the young in our midst.

Grant Thy blessing to rest upon the little children; upon those that are advancing toward youth, and know not the ways of life; upon those that are beginning, with courage and hope and daring, to engage in the enterprises of life. Will the Lord arm them with a true virtue which shall be sovereign over all their adversaries. May they be kept from secret snares. In all things, with all openness and manliness, may they dwell among kindred and companions. May they live with a transparent heart, doing nothing of which they are ashamed before God and men, incorrupt of speech and thought and imagination. And we pray that they may grow in strength, to surpass those that have gone before them.

Bless, we pray Thee, the city in which we dwell. Bless its government. Bless all its magistracy, all its interests, all its families. Remember all Thy people everywhere. Let Thy kingdom come all over the earth, till the world shall be filled with Thy glory.

We ask it in the name of Jesus, the Beloved, to Whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. Amen.

a.

XLVII.

WE come into Thy presence, our Father, with rejoicing. Not from any reason of goodness that is in ourselves—for we have received the benefactions which make us rich—but out of Thy great grace and mercy Thou hast poured forth incessantly, and since we were born, kindnesses without number, by day and by night, warding off hidden danger and preparing the way before us. The heavens at Thy command have dropped the rain and the dew. At Thy command the sun hath gone forth, universal Creator of life. At Thy command the night and the day come in turn to serve us. In all the way of Thy providence Thou hast

continually been gracious unto us. Our cup runs over. We rejoice in Thy bounty; but we have occasion of shame that Thy goodness has made us selfish, and that Thy great lenity and forbearance have made us obstinate, and that we have grown proud, not by reason of that which we have done, but by reason of that which Thou hast done for us. We desire to face our sins, our selfishness and obduracy, our envy and jealousy, our hardness one toward another, our sordid worldliness, and our obliviousness of things spiritual and divine and eternal. We desire to confess and to repent of every transgression, and by the power of the Holy Ghost to turn ourselves away from whatever is evil and toward whatever is good. And we beseech of Thee that we may be guided by Thy good Spirit along the way of a new life into perfected holiness. May we rejoice in all our duties in life; and yet may no pleasure and no occupation blind us to that better life which awaits our coming. May we be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as it is made known to us in His daily providences, waiting and looking for that more glorious disclosure both of Thyself and of ourselves which is in store for the faithful.

We pray for Thy blessing to rest, this night, upon all the services of the sanctuary. Thou hast brought us hither under peculiar circumstances. We ask for all those who, being associated together, have come here to-night, and in whose behalf we speak, the blessing of Almighty God. We pray for them in their corporate capacity. We pray for their prosperity, and for their efficiency. We pray for all the officers, and for all the privates, and for each of them individually, in their own heart, in their own household, and in all the ways in which Thou are leading them. We pray, O Lord, that every one of them, called of Thee to the great battle of life, may be found faithful, with the whole armour of God upon him, and faithful unto the end.

We beseech of Thee to look upon all that are gathered here to-night, from whatever reason or inspiration. May some truth reach them, that they may not have come here in vain, or that they may not go away with only a gratified curiosity. We pray that Thou wilt inspire every one of us with loftier views of duty, with holier impulses of life, with more patient fidelity, with more power for the acquisition of things that are good and for the reprehension of things that are evil. Deliver us from the snare of the tempter. Go with us wherever we are; and may we be prepared for whatever comes upon us; and in all true Christian manliness may we live, may we wait, and may we die; and when at last death shall set us free from the entanglements of this lower life, may we find ourselves gloriously emancipated in the life above.

And the praise of our salvation we will give to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, evermore. Amen.

a.

XLVIII.

WE rejoice, O Father, in Thy beneficence, and in Thy glory so far as it is manifested. How bright is the earth, O sun! and how much brighter is the new earth, O Sun of Righteousness, when Thou dost bring summer to it, and make it rejoice in Thy light and in Thy glory!

We rejoice that Thou hast brought so many into covenant relations with Thee and with the members of this household. We pray that there may spring up in them all those gracious affections which belong to the family. Not merely by earthly relationships are they connected one with another, but by the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for the cleansing of sins. They are brought together, a throng washed in the blood of redemption; and we pray that they may feel from this hour nearer to each other, and

dearer to Thee. May they rejoice that they belong to the great household of faith of every name, throughout the world and through the ages. May they believe that this day their names are spoken in heaven, and that in the communion of the saints, silent but universal, they have a part. Thou dost rejoice over them, O loving Father, and blessed Redeemer, and sanctifying Spirit; and we beseech Thee that it may not be simply a form. May they be Thine. May they belong to the kingdom of God. May they be joined by faith and love to Thee and to each other. For weal or for woe, in all days to come, may they cling steadfastly to their allegiance and to their vows and covenants. Wherever they go, wilt Thou overshadow them. Bring light to them that are in darkness. Bring shade to them that are in the heat of the summer sun. Be their God who have now become Thy children. And we pray that Thou wilt accept the thanks that arise silently from many grateful hearts in their own behalf, in behalf of their children, in behalf of friends that are thus sorted and gathered out from men, and brought into the house of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And we pray, O Lord, that this may be a day of gladness in our midst. We pray that Thou wilt make us to feel nearness to Thee, and to experience the shining of Thy countenance. May our hearts be filled with the rejoicing of Thine own heart as we sit to give thanks in these consecrated seats, in this house made precious and sacred by so many experiences and by such precious memories. May we think of nothing but the grace and bounty of our God; and may we speak of nothing but our own joy and the joys of Thy salvation. We pray that we may not live in vain, beholding Thy glory, and experiencing Thy goodness and our joy therein. Help us so to live that those who are nearest to us may be gently drawn by us to the Lord Jesus.

We pray that Thou wilt grant, this day, everywhere, to

those who are gathered together, Thy presence and Thy blessing. May Thy churches be greatly rejoiced and strengthened. May all those that preach come into communion with Thee, and be brought to the fulness of the blessing of Almighty God. May we be enlarged in our thoughts. May we dismiss the envies and hatreds and dissensions and bickerings of this lower life which we live among the animals; and may we rise into the peace and joy of Thy saints, and rejoice in the Lord, and forget all care, and all trouble, and every disturbance.

And now, we beseech Thee, O God, for the consecration which we desire to make of our lives—pastor and people; this great Church; all that belong to it. We pray that Thou wilt draw near and incline our hearts to renew our covenant of obligations in love. And wilt Thou give us more liberty and more power in holiness. May our lives, as well as our words, give forth the truths of the Gospel with irresistible force.

And we beseech Thee that Thy Name may be honoured and glorified and loved. If we ourselves who are so insensitive are so full of joy to-day, how joyful must Thou be, O Redeemer, and all who are round about thee in the heavenly home!

We thank Thee, O Lord, to-day, that so many who have laboured with us in this church—who have sung with us, and prayed with us, and rejoiced with us—are now rejoicing in the land that is beyond tears and beyond sorrows, and are always bearing about in their hearts us who are of them, and are moved toward them.

And now we pray that as the time goes on we may feel the ripening influence of Thy Spirit, and yearn more and more for that rest which remaineth for the people of God; and that more and more we may be able to lift ourselves above the carnal passions and all the evil dispositions of men. More and more in our souls may we long for the

presence of God, and thirst for it as the hart for the water-brooks.

And at last, when time and joy and sorrow have dealt with us enough, and we are grown to a ripe estate, take us from these lower grounds into the garden of the Lord, to bring forth there the blessed fruits of righteousness.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen. *a.*

XLIX.

BLESSED art Thou, O Lord most high, for the revelation of Thy compassion toward the imperfect and the sinful among men. Behold, how low is the estate of men! How poor are they, the best of them! How far from virtue and perfectness! How unknown among them is true holiness! Therefore, if Thou hadst been strict and stern, how great would have been their wretchedness! Better that there should have been no generations of men than that they should have been born into a world sunless and without Divine compassion. But Thy graciousness has been the safety of the race. Thy long-suffering and patience and love restore men; and Thou hast given Thyself, through the ages, not to the promotion of Thine own pleasure; not to the contemplation of Thine own royalty: Thou hast given forth Thy thought and Thy life for the elevation of creation, lifting it through eternal cycles higher and higher, and bringing men toward Thee, chastening them in love, by Thy law punishing, that by Thy law they may be restrained and developed into those dispositions which shall make their future blessed for evermore. Under this government we rejoice to live, because Thou art Sovereign, tempering justice with mercy, and loving even where Thou dost cause pain; and we proclaim Thee God over all, blessed for ever.

We pray that we may come into a full understanding of

Thy benignity. We rejoice that the Spirit of God is such that perfect purity has compassion on the most impure; that perfect justice is the kindest of all justice; that perfection carries with it universal remembrance, charity, and kindness. Oh that we might understand, at last, that Thou art not furious, belluine, seeking woe and suffering and blood because of transgression, but that Thy atoning heart for evermore is saving, and seeking to save. Breathe upon us the same disposition. May we hate only ourselves. May we have compassion upon all around us, and be severer censors of our own lives and motives than of the lives and motives of others. We pray that we may not seek a cold and hard righteousness; that we may not seek obedience that ministers to self-love and self-glorification. May we seek to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, who causes the sun to rise upon the just and upon the unjust, and by His providence seeks the welfare of all sentient beings.

We pray that Thou wilt grant us to divide aright in our thoughts between good and evil, and between all the instruments by which we are seeking to abate evil and to promote good throughout the world. Oh that the day may come when men shall know how much healing there is in compassion; how much there is in sorrow for others more than in anger against them; how much there is in love that spares while it chastises, and chastises that it may heal.

Grant, we beseech of Thee, that the Spirit of the Lord God may be infused into human life; and while still the earth is under stern law, and dominated by uncharitable force, grant that men, the last product and the most glorious of Thy creative hand, may rise to that sphere of influence which has in it neither earthquake, nor tornado, nor burning fire, nor rending or smiting hammer, but in which the gentleness, and the meekness, and the patience, and

the omnipotent love of God may be reproduced according to the measure of our being, and according to the strength of our nature. Oh for that day to come when the earth may know something of the summer of men's dispositions, which shall exist when the good shall be more united to each other by a common goodness, and when a righteous public sentiment shall arise in the Church and without it, and when they that are redeemed by the blood of Christ who suffered for them and in their stead may seek no blood among men but their own; rather sacrificing themselves for others than treading them down or rending them.

We beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt make haste to bring forth that latter-day glory when there shall be upon the earth peace, justice, truth, knowledge, liberty, and perfect obedience. And let not our hearts grow faint from Thy long delay. Arise and come forth, O Thou God behind the cloud, and reveal the justice and the judgment that are the habitations of Thy throne.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise for evermore. Amen. *a.*

L.

WE draw near to Thee, encouraged, not only by Thy Word, Thou blessed God, but by our own experience. It is not in vain that we call upon the Lord. We have learned it in sickness and in trouble; we have learned it in success and in joy; for it is Thy Spirit and Thy presence that redeem us from the thrall of the flesh, from the weakness that befalls us in this life. Thou dost give us strength in time of need. Thou dost give us victory when the battle presses hard upon us. In care long-continued, in burdens which were grievous to be borne, in conflicts within and without, Thou hast through prayer brought to us comfort and patience and strength. Again and again, though Thou hast not taken away the thorn in the flesh, Thou hast given

us faith sufficient to bear it; and we desire to come in all the hope, and all the expectancy which springs from our past experience. We praise Thee for Thy goodness. Thou art love clothed with everlasting power. Thou hast power to execute the behests of goodness. Thou art everywhere throughout Thy universe bringing forth light to light and joy to joy; and we rejoice that all things everywhere are under the dominion of a Father whose purposes are merciful. Not only, O God, art Thou goodness, but Thou hast told us that the law of Thine own life is, that it is more blessed to give than to receive; and so Thou art enjoying for ever, because Thou art pouring forth Thy creative energy and Thy sympathy with all the things which Thou hast made; and Thou dost marshal them; and they move forward under the superintendence of Thy laws; and we rejoice in Thy government because it is goodness, and in all Thy ways because they are ways of pleasantness, and in Thy paths because they are paths of peace.

Now we pray that we may be more and more enlightened to see these truths, though they be hidden by the affairs of life. May we be able to stand with a steadfast faith in Thy goodness. May we be able to so believe in Thy providence as to submit all things to Thine ordering and to Thy care. May we cast our burdens on the Lord. May we lay our care on Him who cares for us. May we bear our sorrows to the throne of mercy. May we ourselves day by day find Thee a pardoning God, a healing God, and a comforting Saviour. We pray that thus our experience in life may be made eminent, not alone by joy, but by our success in patience during trouble; by our strength under difficulties; by the whole manhood with which we are united to Christ Jesus.

May the light of Thy countenance shine upon others, bringing them to the same sources of comfort and strength and guidance.

We pray that Thou wilt bless the assembled congregation this morning. Behold them in their various needs. We pray that Thou wilt be gracious to each one according to his necessities. May every heart be moved by faith and trust, this morning, to lift itself up for the blessing of God, not in the consciousness of any desert, but in the sense of Divine bounty. Thou hast enough and to spare. Thou sendest Thy rain, not on the things that are comely, but on all things; and Thy providence bestows its blessings upon the good and upon the bad. So grant that we may draw near for Thy favour, not by any consciousness of our deserving, but by a sense of Thine ample generosity, and of Thy great grace and goodness. We pray that thus we may be won by gratitude to obedience and to love.

We pray that Thou wilt grant to all the households that are represented in this congregation an indwelling of Thy presence. May parents be enlightened and strengthened to the full performance of the duties incumbent upon them. May children grow up in purity and in truth and in honour, to be useful members of society.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing not alone upon us, but upon all the Churches round about us, and upon all the interests of this great city. May they who seek for the purification of morals be strengthened unto all hope, and unto all kindness, and unto all fidelity. And we pray that Thou wilt turn away the hearts of men from things that are evil to things that are better.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt look upon this whole nation with its necessities; and grant that the blessing of Almighty God may brood it, and that, as the rain going forth, produces abundant harvests, so the overshadowing even of trouble may bring forth those fruits of goodness which shall abundantly compensate for the moments of darkness and for the hours of suffering.

We pray that Thou wilt overrule the ambitions and cor-

ruptions of evil men. May these things pass away; and may wisdom, and fidelity, and industry, and temperance, and forbearance one toward another, and the fear of the Lord, prevail among this great people. And may all the earth learn righteousness, and may all the people on the globe cast out their superstition and their ignorance. May all mankind, at last, inspired of Thee, rise to feel the dignity with which Thou hast endowed them. Bring forth the long-hidden image of Thine own self in man, and let all the nations of the earth be gathered in: and may all flesh see Thy salvation.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises evermore. Amen.

a.

LI.

WE thank Thee, our Father, that as we look back upon our past lives there arises a sense of Thy goodness and Thy great mercies to us. Whilst we were pursuing the way we were often in darkness and in great struggles. We have suffered pain and sorrow. Under deep bereavements we have needed Thy presence and Thy succouring care. But as from the distance we look back upon our life, it is not a day of storms, or of clouds, but of sunshine, that we behold. The burdens were made light. The sorrows were made radiant by after-coming joys. And the profit which we have derived from the trial of our faith has turned all these reasons in retrospect into reasons of thanksgiving. We thank Thee for the way in which Thou hast dealt with us. Thou hast not put the cross on any too heavily. Thou hast bound no burdens on us which Thou hast not given us strength to bear. Thou hast not wounded our feet in the way, steep though it has been. Hard though the path was, we had vouchsafed to us the strength and the vigour which we needed. While we are self-seeking,

Thou art seeking for us something higher than ourselves. While we are asking for ease every day, Thou art training us for the joy of eternal existence. While we would be content to gravitate again to the earth from whence we sprang, and to take our place among the beasts of the field in sensuous enjoyment day by day, Thou knowest that the germ is in us which shall yet make us sons of God. Thou art by Thy grace and Thy faithfulness of love chastening us, tasking us, and driving us hither and thither in seemingly rude discipline; but it is that Thou mayest bring out in us the lines and the lineaments of Thine own glorious face, and that we may walk worthy of our high vocation.

We thank Thee for all Thy mercies. We mourn over our stupidity and indifference. We mourn that we interpret Thy ways so poorly. We mourn that we have evermore walked as we have in times past, receiving the light as if it were darkness, bearing burdens as if they would crush us, and losing the comfort that we might have had in a life of faith, of trust, of quietude, and of rest in the Lord. Oh, grant that we may so ally ourselves to Thee by our conscious thought and feeling as that our whole life shall walk within the circle of the Divine presence; that we shall be evermore with Christ, and that we shall be content with what we have and with what we lose.

We pray that Thou wilt grant to all those who are in Thy presence Thy special blessing this morning. Are there any who sit in darkness—who are, as it were, in the region and the shadow of death? May a great light arise upon them. Are there any who are mourning the hidings of Thy face? Are there any who are afflicted with pangs of pain and remorse? Are there any who are sad of heart, and know not why? Are there any whose hearts are sick from hope deferred? Are there any who are in great perplexities and doubts? Are there any who are utterly

unable to understand Thy providences which are dealing with them? We commend them all to the light and joy of a higher life, and to the ministration of Thy Spirit, this day. Deal with each heart, we pray Thee, as in Thy sight each heart needs to be dealt with.

We pray that Thou wilt grant to all those who are strangers among us the blessings of the household of faith —nearness of access to God; a clear sense of Divine love; a consciousness of the providence of God which day by day surrounds them and theirs; and we pray that Thou wilt restore them again to those from whom they have been separated, in health, or in growing health, in great mercy, and with a full recognition of God's goodness to them.

We pray that the Divine impulse, the purity and the sweetness of Jesus Christ in His people may be more and more apparent to the world, and that the power of the Gospel, evolved in human experience, may be more and more felt, until every part of the earth shall see Thy salvation. Let Thy promises be fulfilled. Strengthen the powers that are for good, and weaken those that are for evil. We pray that Thou wilt dash down the sword, and destroy the destroyer. We pray that Thou wilt breathe knowledge and strength upon all Thy people, and so defeat oppression. We pray that Thou wilt drive ignorance forth from among men, and so destroy superstition. So may wisdom and piety fill the earth.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen. *a.*

LII.

O THOU that art searching the earth by the light of the sun, fairer art Thou than the day. More summer is in Thy shining, O Sun of righteousness, than in the outward beams

of light. Come forth, then, we beseech Thee, and shine upon us, this morning: shine upon our sleep, to arouse us; upon our path, to bring us to life again; upon our winter and barrenness, to bring forth from things concealed the germ and the growth. Bring forth all things that are pleasant and fair in Thine own eyes: for our hearts are as the wilderness; and no man knows how to nurture them but Thou that art the Husbandman. Thou that hast life in its source and power uncreated canst be the Author and Thou canst be the Finisher of everything that is good in us; and in our helplessness we come to Thee; and in Thy compassion this plea, "We need Thee," overcomes all. All parts of our life need the touch of Thine; and we draw near to Thee, not thinking whether we are worthy, and not repelled by any consciousness of unworthiness; we draw near to Thee for the reason that we are unworthy, and that by reason of our transgression we are removed from all desert. Thou art God because imperfection touches Thee; and Thou dost love perfection; and in this dost Thou manifest love, that Thou dost take all things that are poor and broken and out of joint, to heal them, and to nourish them into fair lines of beauty again. We draw near to Thee because we are sick, and because it is in Thy nature to have compassion, and so to love health as to seek to drive sickness away, and to bring health into its place. Thou dost love justice so that Thou dost seek to rectify the crooked ways of injustice and make them just in all hearts. Thou dost love benevolence so that Thou art committed against all selfishness, which cramps with cruelty whatever it touches, and art seeking to bring forth out of the hearts of men the fair fruits and heavenly dispositions of love.

Now, because we need Thee on every side; because we are low-minded and low-thoughted; because we dwell in the realm of fear; because our strongest motives touch the body; because we eat, and drink, and work, and sleep;

because we are worldly and are beasts of burden and sometimes ravening beasts; because we need translation out of these physical conditions and out of this sensuous life into the Divine, we ask the power of resurrection which is in Thine heart. Thou All-Lover; Thou that art living that Thou mayest pour forth a flood of light everywhere, and that Thou mayest be life to everything that is, we draw near for our portion. We do not come to chide Thee, but we come boldly. We come full of wickedness, full of suffering, full of want; we come full of weakness that is our own fault; we come feeling our great need; and to Thy heart our plea is irresistible.

Come forth, then, graciously; and, as first of all Thy gifts, give us this: the consciousness of Thy presence; the sweet and blessed atmosphere which tells us that Thou art here.

The sun draws near to us; we know that it is coming by the warmth that is in the air; so grant that we may feel that benignity, that graciousness, that hope, that aspiration, that faith, that yearning, that inspiration, which show that Thou art round about us, and that we are quickened by the Divine nature. And not only grant that we may feel Thy presence as the first of all Thy gifts, and as the richest of them, but breathe into us all confidence, all hope, and all trust; for without Thee we are worse than the weeds that perish in the wilderness; but with Thee we are in the Lord's garden, trained to all fruitfulness and blessed uses.

And we pray for the bounty of Thine heart, to-day. In Thee is remedy for all our want. In Thee is reward for all our desire. Give us Thine own self; and then we shall rejoice in the Lord, and be strong in the Lord, abide in the Lord, and be rich in the Lord. For what is all our life here, which is as a thistle-down rolling before the wind; what is all our work here, compared with that up-lifted and outreaching eternal life toward which we go unknowing yet, and toward which we go illumined partly by Thy Word

and partly by Thy Spirit? Take anything but that from us. Put anything upon us that is needful for that. Let the outward man perish; but oh, renew the inward man day by day. We ask not for joy; but we ask for manhood in Christ Jesus, whether it comes by joy or by sorrow, by pain or by caress. Give to us that which allies us immortally to Thee, that we may be borne up in life, buoyed up in death, and brought home with an everlasting exaltation.

Be near to those in Thy presence who specially and personally need Thee. We cannot unroll their wants, nor read their unwritten souls, but they are disclosed to Thee. Naked and open are we before Him with whom we have to do. Thou Healer, Thou Comforter, Thou Friend and Lover, make Thyself known at the door of every soul that consciously or unconsciously needs Thee; and grant to each one, according to Thine insight of his necessity, that which he specially needs. Wilt Thou grant light to those that sit in darkness; grant comfort to those that have been mourners; resignation and twilight of joy to those that have been bitterly bereaved. Grant the lifting up of a better horizon and a fairer light to those that have been overthrown in all their prospects in life. May there be none so poor here as to feel that their life is a failure. Let every one have the thought of that better house, that nobler city, that higher life, won by the thrall, or by the strife, or by the afflictions of his conflict in this world. So may the sounds that batter us down here be but as the beating in the march by which we ascend from ruin and beyond weakness into the life that waits for all; and waits for us especially who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray for any that are entangled in doubts, that the snare may part and let them out. If there are any who have wandered away from the freshness of their hope and

faith, and who sit in the chill, waiting for the coming of summer, oh, breathe upon them with Thy Spirit and bring them again into life and joy.

We pray that Thou wilt bless the aged and ripen their remaining years. We pray that Thou wilt be with all that stand under burdens and are bearing the responsibilities of active life, to quicken their consciences, to strengthen their hands, and to ennoble their purposes.

We pray that Thou wilt bless all the young. Grant that they may escape those dangers that lie in wait for them, and would fain captivate them. Bring them, we beseech Thee, through every temptation and trial to honour, and truth, and piety, and usefulness.

We pray for the spread of knowledge that shall carry with it virtue. We pray for the amelioration of manners; for temperance; for reformation from vice and from crime. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt build up Thy kingdom in the midst of this great nation; and may it be, not a terror to its neighbours and to the weak, but a nation that shall fear God, a nation that shall defend the weak, a nation that shall stand in amity and in relations of love to all people. And may the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ be established in our midst—a kingdom of peace and of righteousness, and to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. Amen.

a.

LIII.

BEFORE we knew our own wants, O merciful Father, Thou didst discern them afar off; nor didst Thou leave to chance their supply. In channels of eternal mercy flow the thoughts of God to us through all the lines that are sources of supply; and we as children are perpetually met by all the things which we need. More are the gifts which come

unconsciously to us than are those which for discipline we bring to ourselves. They are eternal varieties. All the swaddling bands of earth whereby Thou hast expressed Thy will and Thy pleasure are so many garments of praise to those that understand the way of the Lord.

We rejoice that Thou hast clothed nature with Thyself, and made it speak of Thee, and addressed it to that in us which can understand Thee. While Thou dost feed the body and all that we have in common with the brute beneath us, how much is there also for our affections, for our understandings, and for our spiritual sense, so that afar off with blessed insight we see things which the eye cannot discern. For Thy royal bounty how shall we give Thee thanks? We rejoice that it sets forth Thy nature to our apprehension. We desire also to be good to those whom we do not know, or whom we know afar off, or whom we know to be leading imperfect, sinful lives. We desire to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect, who causes His sun to rise upon the just and the unjust alike. We desire to be as light and knowledge and consolation to all who are around us, not because they are ours, but because they are Thine—all Thine—and our brothers, however remote or unknown or even oppugnant they may be to us. And we pray that we may subdue the rebellious nature that is in us—the anger, the quarrelsomeness, the hardness of heart, the indifference, and whatever spoils the sweetness of a living soul. And give to us, we beseech Thee, a quick discernment of things right and wrong. Give us an eager desire for things that are right, and an eager desire to rescue those from wrong who have stumbled therein. And we pray that our souls may be a flame toward God and a light toward men, not to consume them with indignation, but with longsuffering and patience and helpfulness to draw them to things that are for their good now and for ever.

Yet behold how we are hindered. Behold how cares and weariness fatigue our understanding and our conscience. Behold how we are beset with infirmities on every side. Behold how self-indulgence is perpetually drawing us away from higher paths of duty. Behold how we are with discouragements seeking to redeem the present moments, the passing hours, and the eternity that is before us. Behold how we struggle with pride, that is cold and cruel continually, and that lifts itself up as a mountain crowned with eternal snow. Behold how easily we are won by the giddiness of vanity, and by all the allurements of various pleasure. Behold us to teach, and care for, and save.

Bless all that are in Thy presence—those that are parents; those that are teachers; those that are responsible for the conduct of others in all the relations of life—that they may be just, humane, and tender; that they may seek the things that are right and good, and that they may have energy therein.

We pray that Thou wilt grant that the way of life and duty may become clearer from day to day; and especially to those who are advancing beyond the line of this life, and whose steps incline downward. May the coming life make their light shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt help all that are in doubt; all that are in trouble of any kind; all that are in deep affliction; all that mourn, and know not where to look for consolation. Will the Lord have them in His holy care and keeping. Thou that dost go after the wandering sheep; Thou that dost bring back the estrayed lambs in Thine arms, look after those, we beseech of Thee, that are suffering; and we pray for Thy great mercy to abound toward them all. Who of us do not need mercy? Who of us are not pensioners upon Thy bounty and undeserved care?

And let Thy kingdom come everywhere. O Saviour!

When shall the world be saved? O Redeemer! When shall redemption be completed? When shall the struggle end? From lower depths, bring it into light; and from light into liberty; and from liberty into the glory of the inheritance of the children of light.

And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

LIV.

GRANT unto us, before we ask it, the evidence of Thy benignity and Thy great grace in love, O Lord our Father; for by that name we are brought near to Thee, laying aside fear and enduing ourselves with hope and sacred confidence; because, if Thou art our Father, Thy love is greater for us than our love is for ourselves. We rejoice in the supremacy of Thy goodness. The things that we would, we cannot; we must needs *grow* into goodness; but it abides eternally with Thee, who art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Grant unto us riches in Thy strength, and in Thy wisdom, and in Thy goodness, wherein all our hope exists. We cast away vain confidence; we cast away all self-flatteries; we cast away everything that is based upon our merit and our attainment. What need we more than this in Thee in whom we live and move and have our being?

Grant, we pray Thee, to-night, that a sense of this relationship may fill our hearts with light and with joy. May we feel that we have all things in Thee. Shall not He who for our sake gave His only and dearly beloved Son also freely give us all things? May we not suffer trouble to over-roll and tide down our hope and our joy therein. May we not be terrified by the adversary. May we in no way suffer our fears to dominate over us. May we trust in the Lord, may we rejoice in the Lord, may we be strong in

the Lord, so that day by day the life that we live in the flesh shall be by faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

We pray that Thou wilt vouchsafe an evening blessing to those who have come up unto Thy sanctuary. Listen to the unuttered desires of Thy servants. Listen to the secrets of their hearts, which they could not tell, even if they would, one to another, but which are open and plain before Thee. Give strength to the strengthless. Give hope to the desponding. Give to the desolate all that companionship with Thee which they need. Grant that those who are cast out may not feel themselves to be cast away. To all that have stumbled and fallen, grant recovery. To all that count themselves unworthy of eternal life, looking at it as forfeited, and beyond their reach, or will, or endeavour, speak a welcome; and though they be prisoners in evil, may they be inheritors of hope in Thee; and may they look to the Redeemer who shall bring them out of captivity, and give to them the robes of His own righteousness. We pray for all those that are in trial; for all those that are tempted; for all that meditate evil; for all that despairingly cast themselves away, and care not what shall become of them; for all that are forgetting the counsels of their youth; for all that are giving way to the pleasure-maxims of life and its greed and ambition. We pray that Thou who dost breathe health and life wilt cause the spirit of truth and honour and rectitude to settle down upon them. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt help all that are beginning life to take the right steps and the right path. Wilt Thou grant unto all the power to perceive the evil and to avoid it; to perceive the good, and to choose it, and to walk therein.

Bless those that are absent from us. Be near to any that are sick. Grant Thy presence to all that wrestle with hard conditions of life; to all that are far away from us; to those

who are upon the sea; and to those who are in foreign lands. We offer our supplications for them; and we pray that the God of all mercy may bountifully despose His mercy to each and every one of them.

May Thy kingdom be in our hearts, and may Thy will be done there as it is done in heaven. And when we shall finish our schooling here, may we rejoice to hear the summons; and may dying be to us blessedness; and may we rejoice to depart and be with Christ, which is better than life. And to Thy Name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

a.

LV.

FOR Thy manifold mercies made known through Thy providence, O Lord our Father, we render Thee thanksgiving and praise. For the year, for the changing seasons, for the abundant fruits thereof, for all Thy way, both palpable and hidden, by which unknown dangers are warded off, and by which mercies are brought near to us, we render Thee thanksgiving. For our homes, for our friendships and loves, for all the ministrations of the Christian household, for parents and children beloved, for brothers and sisters, and for all those whom we hold to the heart in the fellowship of a common relation of labour and affection in the cause of God and of man, we render Thee thanksgiving We thank Thee for the days of our lives. For the days of darkness and of burden and of trouble, yea, of grievous trouble, hard to be borne, as well as for days of light and joy, we thank Thee. We thank Thee that we have had put upon our necks Thy yoke, and that we have had put upon our backs Thy burden. Since Thou didst wear thorns for us, we rejoice that we have been permitted to wear some thorns. As Thou wert pierced for us, we rejoice to believe that we are partakers of Thy suffering, though we are not

pierced unto death as Thou wert. We render Thee thanks for all those influences in life which have made us what we are. Oh, how shall we make known our thanksgiving for those greater mercies to us—the indwelling of Thy Spirit; the communication of Thy grace; the blessed fellowship of hours of prayer; the undying hope which night could not quench; those promises which have been yea and amen thus far, and which are even as the trees are, breaking forth in bud and blossom and promising fruit! Ten thousand promises in Thy Word are opening day by day. Somewhat have we of them now; but more of them shall we have in the future. We thank Thee that though we are so far off Thou hast brought us nearer; and that though we are so unworthy Thou art putting a ring upon our hand and a robe upon our nakedness, and bringing us within Thine embrace. We thank Thee for the ministration of Thy love; and we desire to walk in it and to trust in it. Why need we repine as to what we are? We are what we are by the grace of God, and not by anything which is in ourselves. We rejoice that our faith in the future stands, not in what we are, but in the great grace and mercy and generosity of our loving God; and in Thee may we stand steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Grant that Thy blessing may rest upon us this evening, shut in by the darkness. Be Thou our light. May we rejoice in the sweet songs of the sanctuary. May there spring up from them memories of days gone by, and may our imagination people the way both with things passed through the memory, and with things to come through faith, and so may this Sabbath day, sweet and peaceful in all its twilight hours, go out even in the darkness filled with stars shining brightly down from the heavenly cope upon our way. Teach us so to number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom. Grant us to-morrow, and

every day of the week, the full blessing of the Sabbath; and from week to week may we thus be girded and set forward until the last Sabbath shall come, until the day of rejoicing shall arrive, until the emancipation of death shall break upon us. And while we leave behind us weakness and tears and sorrows we shall hail the joys that are before us, and the sweet and blessed company that shall come forth to meet us; but chiefly Thee, our Lord Jesus, Saviour and Master—Thee, whom we have loved, by whose love we have been taught, by whom we have been guided and saved, and with whom we shall rejoice through the eternal spheres.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be the praise, evermore. Amen. *a.*

LVI.

WE rejoice, O Thou God of all light and power, that with Thee there is no variableness or shadow of turning. Clouds are for us: but eternal light is for Thee; for, in the city of the blessed there is no need of the sun, nor of the moon, nor of the stars. Thou art the light thereof. We are yet low, struggling to be free from mortal flesh, we are stormed and blown about tempestuously, and we are full of sorrows and griefs; but there is a calm beyond the conflict; and a peace which passeth all understanding awaits those who emerge from this life into the life of the Spirit; and they are called, and are disciples of Thine own, and are brought home to Thy house, and to the fair fields of heaven.

O Lord our God, give us some glimpse above this earth and beyond the stormy air, that we may rejoice in those who depart from among us, that we may save our requiem for us who dwell here, and utter our chants of joy for those who are gone and are going toward the place of emigration, in the path unknown, of which no mortal man can tell,

though angels guide unerringly. Those who have heaven in their hearts may draw near to Thee and to them that are gone before; and, though the voice of sorrow is heard here, it is the voice of rejoicing that is heard there. Though men weep round about the ashes, the flame has gone to mingle with the light of the eternal world.

We rejoice that we have this hope We rejoice that—over against the sorrow that invades all households, and moves everywhere, and threatens every one, in youth or in age—we have the sure word of Thy testimony; that we have the sure faith of the best who have lived among men on earth; yea, we have the witness of Thy Spirit in ours that testifies that we are the sons of God. Whatever Thou hast, we shall have—Thine eternity, Thy glory, and all the treasures of that land where Thou dwellest.

Now grant, we pray Thee, that we may take away the ashes from our brows, and throw off the garments of mourning, and clothe ourselves in white, and walk as the heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, despising shame and tribulation, and all things that seem to oppress the mortal body, in the hope of that reunion and that joy which await us beyond.

Draw near to those who are passing through the valley and the shadow of death. Draw near to those who can see life flickering as a taper going out. Draw near to those for whom there seemingly shall be no more any morning, and whose grief is as midnight that abides. Be gracious unto them, and breathe into the heart of every one of them, and say to them, "No affliction for the present is joyous, but grievous; but yet, O My son! O My daughter! it shall work out the peaceable fruit of righteousness." May our hearts, therefore, when the plough of sin has turned the furrow, be open for the seed that shall grow and bring forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

We pray that Thou wilt draw near to all those who are

afraid to die. Take away the terror from them; and may all their fears be but as the storms are that drive the mariner into the safe harbour; and in the hope and love and grace of God, may they be able to find rest from the pursuing storm.

We pray that Thou wilt take away from the young the fear of dying. May they measure their life beyond the horizon, and not be sorry when they are permitted to fly away to it. Oh, grant that it may seem to us as though heaven were the summer and earth the winter; and may we rejoice in every sign of relaxation of rigour that betokens the coming of better times.

We pray that Thou wouldst grant that the Gospel of Christ, and all the sweet influences of the Saviour's heart, and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, may so lift us above the things of time and sense, and the flesh, that we shall be known as the sons of God, by our dignity and superior bearing in trouble, by our devotion to things not seen, and by our indifference to things that are seen. And while, from day to day, we perform the duties that belong to life, and society, and each other, still may it be as those who are conscious that this is all transient, that the visible is passing, but that the invisible abides and is sure.

Draw near, we pray Thee, to every household. Bless all parents. Bless their children. May every house be a temple of God. May the parents be God's ministers, not only in word, but in deed and disposition. Grant that the light of higher knowledge may spread from household to household, from city to city, from nation to nation. Behold how far men are down! Behold how the whole world dwells in iniquity! Behold how very deep is the darkness, and how very few are the spots of light where light is the strongest and is a power! Lord, have mercy upon this world! What are Thy counsels? Why dost Thou delay so long Thy coming? Make haste, we beseech of Thee, for men are

discouraged and weak. Men grow cold, and selfishness ramps and riots everywhere, and the glory of the Lord is obscured, and we dwell in this earth as in cities that are befogged and smoked with the fumes that rise from beneath. Lord God, make haste in Thine own day, and in Thine own way, to come for the relief of men who are enthralled by the animal and by sin. Break up the power of selfishness. Bring in justice and truth and righteousness, that men may fear and love God, that they may love and respect each other, and that they may dwell together in amity. Then shall the lamb and the lion lie down together. Then shall all the earth break forth into singing and rejoicing.

Hear us in these our petitions and supplications, in the ever dear and adorable name of our Saviour, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

a.

LVII.

O LORD, our Almighty Father, who in the depths of Thy heart hast purposes of love concerning every soul of man; who desirest not the sorrow or death of any of Thy creatures, we thank Thee that Thou art Light, and in Thee is no darkness at all, not one speck of anything that is not pure or altogether perfectly good. And so we lift up our hearts to Thee because we do believe, in some imperfect fashion, in Thy perfect love; and desire to get a perfect hold of the hope that Thou art, with all Thy strength waiting to help us. O Lord, Thou dost in the greatness of Thy love bow down Thyself from high heaven to help, to succour, and to save poor creatures like us. Thou, who art the highest and foremost of all, hast set the mightiest example of condescension and lowliness; and we thank Thee for that great story in which the bowing down of Thy love is commended to our hearts; and we beseech

Thee that the mind may be in us that was in Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself of His riches that we might be made rich. Help us, we beseech Thee, drawn by the love which is so wonderful and constantly manifested, to turn away from all our evil, heartily to loathe the sins that have stood between us and Thee. May we, O Lord, be drawn nearer to Thee in the joy of Thy love and believed goodness. May we enjoy a faith in Thee and in what Thou art, and art willing to be to every one of us. Draw us away from all our evil. May we be lifted above the temptations that are round about us. May our hearts' inclinations be cleansed and purified; all our tastes and desires be lifted up nearer to Thee. May we be delivered from the bondage of the things that perish. May our hearts' affections not be set upon anything that can ever be withdrawn from us, or ever disappoint us. May we live fully to God, and with our hearts increasingly emptied of all that conflicts with our full possession and enjoyment of Thee and of Thy service. As we think of what our lives have been, and of what they might have been, we seem to ourselves to be full of evil, and to have done nothing all our days in a vain show, and fed ourselves upon follies and the husks thereof. We beseech Thee that we may keep constantly a wholesome sense of the unreality and insufficiency of all created things, and may thereby be led closer unto Thee, and may be brought more and more to conquer the temptations, which veil themselves in fair and attractive forms and are ready to draw us away from love, and patience, and goodness, and everything. O Lord! Thou knowest how weak all our hearts are, and we in some measure have understood it, but not as we might have done had we learned our weakness and unreliableness. But we turn ourselves unto Thee, and pray that Thou wouldst strengthen us by Thy might, and turn us away from all our iniquities; doing that which is lovely and right for love's sake of the Lord that bought

us and died for us. Help us to feel day by day the tranquillity that comes from yielding up our souls to Thine. May we never depart from the paths of rectitude, but may we always feel that they are the paths of pleasantness for us. And may our inclinations be so completely brought into harmony with the law of God, that for us to *know* what is right, is all one and the same thing as to do it. Help us to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to live in the fear of the Lord. For all the past we thankfully would accept, in Jesus Christ Thy Son, that forgiveness He died that we might obtain; and pray that His health may abide in our spirits, and His Cross may be the anchorage of all our souls. Take us into Thy care; in Thy great love and kindness forgive all that has been amiss in our approach to Thee, and mercifully receive and answer us now, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

β.

LVIII.

O LORD! our most gracious and merciful Father, we would bring to Thee now our lowly thanksgivings for all Thy great kindness and love to us, and whilst our memories go back over some portion of the days that are gone, we would adore Thee for all remembered or forgotten of Thy providences and of Thy love; for we do not need memory to make us sure that all which has ever come from Thine hand has had a great purpose and a wise meaning in regard to us. So we would bless Thee, and we pray for grace to do it with full and true hearts. We bless Thee for all the way by which the Lord our God hath led us, and whilst Thou hast been so gracious in the past we thank Thee that we can hope in Thee perfectly for all the future.

Strengthen us, we pray Thee now, that we may draw near to Thee with lowly and obedient and loving spirits Do Thou quicken us that we may call upon Thy Name

with more earnestness of desire and more true submission and more true faith than we sometimes have. We acknowledge that, as we go about our daily work, we too often forget Thee, for whose sake and by whose strength it should all be done; we confess that we yield far too much to the temptations that are around us, drawing us away from Thee. We live as if this present world were all we had to do with or depend upon; our conduct and our thoughts and our desires are too much like those of the men whose portion is in this world, and who find their good in the things that perish. Do Thou deliver us, we pray Thee, from all foolish and sinful over-estimate of the worth of the transitory things here; and enable us—beholding Thee at all times and living near Thee by loving communion with Thee—to rise above the temptations of this fleeting present, and to find in Thyself the enduring substance of righteousness, the treasure that the world cannot give, and no change can take away.

O Lord! Thou who art our portion and our strength, may we all of us find that in Thee is an inheritance sufficient for our desires and needs, and that possessing Thee we are truly rich. And do Thou help us, we pray Thee, to draw near to Thee day by day with closer intimacy of friendship and fellowship; may our thoughts turn to Thee ever amid the cares of life; amidst the duties of the day may the remembrance of Thy great Name, of Thy love, and of Christ the Son of Thy love, be ever familiar to our thoughts. And so may we never be far away from Thee, but wheresoever we go may we still be in the House of the Lord; and whatsoever we do may we still be serving Him, may all our lives be waiting upon God, and may we learn to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks.

We would come to Thee this evening, O Lord! with humble acknowledgments of our many evils and short-

comings; we look back over another day and we cannot but see that there has been much that Thou canst not have looked upon with approval. We have done right things perhaps, but from such imperfect and unworthy motives. We have kept ourselves from outward transgressions, no doubt, but Thou hast seen how far our hearts have been from Thee, and how much of all our life has been altogether uninfluenced by thoughts of Thyself and of Thy love. O Lord! we stray away from Thee ever; and we are constantly forgetting whose we are, and in whose hand are all our ways. We pray for Thy pardon for everything in us that has flowed from that root of evil; we beseech Thee that all the evil words and thoughts, the unselfish and unlovely and unChristlike, that have been in us we may be forgiven. We beseech Thee that Thy gracious hand may purge away all our evil, and that Thy good Spirit breathed into all our hearts may make us more pure and holy, more earnest and simple, more devout in spirit and more devoted in life unto our Lord and Master. Give us, we pray Thee, day by day, a constant sense of Thy presence with us, and may that thought that Thy light is near, that Thy light is streaming out upon us to bless and lead us, may that keep our hearts in the day of trouble, and gird our hearts as in a strong fortress from all evil and temptation. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst enable us to live in a more close observance of our Master's example, walking in His footsteps and following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Day by day may we tread in Christ's path and grow like Him as the years go on. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst bless each of us here before Thee; Thou knowest all our different circumstances and wants, do Thou graciously bestow Thy gifts upon us according to Thy knowledge of our true necessities, and prepare us by Thy Holy Spirit, for all Thy will concerning us.

And let none of Thy providences come to any of us and

take us unawares, nor impose upon us heavier tasks than we are able to perform. We know that Thou dost not call upon Thy servants to do or bear anything beyond the strength which Thou dost give them, though we often find that we have been called upon to do and to bear beyond the strength that we have taken from Thee; and we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst help us to make our own all the powers of Thy good Spirit, and the energies of Thy Gospel and of Thy grace; that in the spirit of the Lord and of His might we may be ready, always ready, for every task and for every circumstance.

We pray for Thy blessing to be granted to us this evening as we are met here, do Thou help us in trying to speak a word in Thy name. Guide all our thoughts and draw all our minds near to Thyself; if there be any of us in weakness, or indifference, or slothfulness of spirit, or sluggishness of desire; if the world still has its hold upon our hearts, holding us fast, tying and keeping us from rising unto Thy presence, do Thou, O Lord! enable us to cast off the taint and the burden and to come to Thee with a free spirit, and get again from Thee our communion with Thee. Thus, having blessing with us, do Thou lead us in the conflict of daily life.

Help us to speak a word for Thee, draw us all near to Thee, pour out Thy good spirit in hearing or in speaking. Bless us whenever we assemble in such fashion and for such ends, we pray Thee; and let all the work that is done amongst us in our public or private obligations, upon older or younger persons, have Thy rich blessing and help.

Now, O Lord! we desire to pray for a blessing on all those that are dear to us and known to us. Especially, we beseech Thee, that wheresoever there is weakness of body or distress and darkness of mind, Thou wouldst be present in Thy strength and in Thy peace. We pray Thee for all the absent ones, for all that are in sickness, to these

do Thou reveal Thyself as the Lord who healeth. We pray Thee to help those who are in any trouble, that they may find rest and patience in Thee, and that they may have a happy issue out of all their troubles; that happy issue which consists in being brought by their trouble nearer to Thee.

And now, O Lord! take us unto Thy holy care; forgive our many sins, manifest Thyself as we are here this evening, and accept us now in Christ our Lord. Amen.

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LIX.

O LORD our Heavenly Father, we thankfully acknowledge how tender is Thy goodness. We have no words or thoughts adequately to show forth all that which Thou hast been and art unto us, beyond our imperfect desires. We thank Thee that Thou art ever wont to deal with us in such liberal and royal fashion, flooding us with large gifts beyond our deserts and above our wishes. The abundance of good which flows from Thee requires larger vessels and goodlier than we are; and we have let run to waste the precious gifts which have come to us from Thee. But we pray Thee that Thou wouldst forgive us this, as all our other faults, the unthankful reception of Thy largest and best gifts. We treasure Thy best gifts belonging to this world; and yet the greatest and noblest ones we allow to lie unused and unfruitful. And we feel that we might have been very much wiser and holier, and so, happier and liker Thyself than we are, if we had only done as we ought to have done with Thy benefits, and been good stewards of the manifold grace of God. And so, O Lord, we need, with all our thanksgivings, thus to blend lowly confession of our own unworthiness. It is not as real as it ought to be, nor do we feel it as we ought to feel it. But for all our faults, and for the faults of the confession of our faults, we

turn ourselves to Thee and pray Thee mercifully to forgive and quicken and inspire us. Lift us up from the low grovelling life and fill our souls with large and happy thoughts of Thee. Turn our understandings to apprehend more and more the greatness of Thy truth, and gladden our spirits with the communication of Thy love and strength. Draw us into the light of Thy presence, and may we always live there. We have come from different scenes, from different joys, and sorrows, and cares, and duties; and however diverse may be our experience, there is one ear into which we can pour all the events of our lives, and ask for sympathy which is never refused. We only ask that Thou wouldst make us more wise to know the infinite tenderness of Thy purposes and the strong love of Thy large heart. May we gather more, into our own experience, of the riches of Thy goodness day by day. Forgive, we beseech Thee, all the evil that we have done, all the good we have neglected, all the imperfect and stained motives which are in these acts. Forgive our feebleness of faith and thought, that so often lets a sea of doubt sweep across our minds, and clouds come between us and Thee. Forgive us that the ordinary tenour of our daily lives is pitched so low as that often it seems to be a contradiction to our deeds to come and pray, and that the memory of God and heaven so often comes in as an interruption into our daily work. Help us to live after that Great Pattern of which we have been reading, with our affections set upon the things that are above, and our lives consciously hidden in Christ with Thee. May the deep roots of our happiness, of all our thinking and action, be with Thee. May we find in Thee—not in any creature of Thy hand—the true end and aim of our being, and day by day may we make our own of that rich fulness of Thy dear Son. And for all burdens and cares which thou hast laid upon any of us, for all weariness of life, for all disappoint-

ments, for all sorrows and griefs, let Thy grace be an all-sufficient refuge and strength. Enlarge our desires and make our hold of Thee be more sure, more quiet, more constant, more confident. Make our lives happier, not with the dazzling brightness of earthly prosperity, but with that immortal calm from Thine own face. And so keep us above the temptations that lie round about us, and may our hearts find such delight and peace in Thee that the snares of the world may cease to be snares to us: and our hearts, weaned from the things that are earthly, may find their true full joy in Thee and the unseen things at Thy right hand. May Thy grace day by day shine more clearly along all our paths, and by the light shadowing upon them from God, shining more and more unto the perfect day. We ask Thee to strengthen us in all the various paths which Thy providence appoints to us. May those whose lives' paths seem to be settled for the rest of their days, as well as those whose future may be more uncertain, be able to commit all to Thee, and draw from Thee sufficient help and strength for the days of evil. Help us, we beseech Thee, to live exempt from care, and in the peace of God which passeth all understanding. Bless all connected with us in Church fellowship and worship, present or absent; and we pray that Thy Good Spirit may be poured upon us, that the work of the Lord may not languish but prosper, that our desires may be more deep and ardent, our hearts more actively set thereto. May Thy Name be dear to all amongst us, and become precious to many who know it not. May souls be gathered in and sinful hearts be quickened by the life given to them through our instrumentality through Jesus Christ. Give us the joy of seeing that the pleasure of the Lord prospers in our hands. May we be a devout and an earnest people. May Thy servants seek to spread the savour of Thy name whithersoever their influence reaches, and by word and by work to proclaim Christ the Saviour and the

Friend. If there be any amongst us, near to us, or dear to us, who are in any kind of trouble, comfort them. Be with those that be in mourning. We thank Thee for them that are departed in Thy faith. We beseech Thee that our lives may be shaped after the pattern of those that are gone before; and that men may consider the end of their conversation, and that for any grief or care Thy grace may be felt to be more than adequate, and Thy strength made perfect in human weakness. In the few words uttered this evening may Thy wisdom and Thine own end and will be set forth persuasively, lovingly, and clearly, so as to touch many hearts. Hear our supplications, be very gracious, lift every burden from our minds and all weakness and deadness from our hearts, and help us to rejoice as they that find great treasure. Accept and bless us through Christ our Saviour. Amen.

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LX.

O LORD! Our Almighty Father! Give to our dim eyes the vision of Him who is invisible, that in the light of that solemn and blessed presence all things here may dwindle into insignificance and nothingness, and may lose their power either to terrify or lower us.

We bless Thee that we know of a better King, whose wrath is more to be dreaded than all earthly frowns; and we thank Thee that we know of better riches, whose substance is more to be desired than all the treasures of Egypt; yea! than much fine gold.

And we pray that our faith may be strong and our affection and consciousness of the things that are eternal, at Thy right hand, vivid and perpetual; that no delights here may have power to turn us away from Thee, nor any temptations seem to us to present greater attractions than the joys at Thy right hand. Fill our hearts, we pray Thee.

with the full consciousness of Thy great love, and our minds with Thy truth; and let all our desires be satisfied in Thyself; in whom alone is the Fountain of all blessedness, and from whom alone must come all that makes human hearts glad. Blessed be Thy Name for all Thou hast given us, though we have been such imperfect stewards and receivers of the great grace of our God. And we pray that we may have more of that hunger of heart after Thyself, more of those desires after righteousness which Thou wilt satisfy! and that our spirits may long for the full possession of all Thy love and all Thy strength and grace.

We thank Thee, O Father! that though Thou dost compass our paths sometimes with darkness, and dost surround Thy servants with clouds, and wrap Thine own way in mystery and Thy path in the deep waters, yet that all Thy children who have ever come to the end have been able to say, as Thou hast said when Thou didst finish Thy work of creation; and we pray that we may have the faith to go with us to the end, that we may judge nothing before the time; but ever commit the keeping of our souls and our circumstances unto Thee in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

We come to Thee this evening with the humble acknowledgment which Thy great and constant mercies make so comforting to our hearts; even though our hearts are neither so thankful nor so observant of Thy goodness as they ought to be; and we would spread our spirits before Thee, feeling that for our deepest gratitude, as for everything else, we need a High Priest to present our offerings before Thee—One on whom shall be laid all the iniquity of His people; and we thank Thee that through Christ we can bring our acknowledgments while from Him we receive all blessings,—all our daily blessings, the happiness of life, health and strength, and all the various things that make up the sum of our daily life and

our outward existence; they all flow to us through Him, whose hands were bruised for our sakes and are now loaded with gifts for men. And we bless Thee that we have such a Lord, whose gifts are ever fresh and new; that He receives from Thee and gives to us all things richly to enjoy. Through Him we would offer our sacrifice this evening, and pray that Thou wouldst help us in Thy presence that we may love our Master and Saviour more, and give ourselves up more completely to Him, to be guided and shaped according to His sovereign will. Oh! do Thou melt our hearts, we pray Thee, into likeness of Him whose likeness is Thy likeness; and make us what Christ was by the power of His own life living in our hearts. May that spirit that was in Him dwell also in us, drawn by us from Him; and where the Spirit of the Lord is may there be in our spirits the same sense of being made free by the Spirit abiding in us. May we be ever guided, ever delivered from the burden of our transgressions and from the bondage of evil habits; and each day that we live may we become more like Thee; and whatsoever Thou wouldst have us, and whatsoever we expect to be when another world dawns upon us, show us, O Lord, how short and shortening the time is, that we may pass through the world as pilgrims and sojourners; abstaining from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, may our lives be for higher objects than any of those about us. So may we live for that unseen land and that invisible King, immortal, whom we hope one day to see, and with whom we hope one day to dwell. We pray Thee that all past evil, of whatsoever degree, and of whatsoever kind it may be, may be blotted out by the loving forgiveness of Jesus Christ our Lord; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins. And we pray that, for the sake and by the power of that same Saviour, the newness of life which Thou dost promise to

them that love Him may be granted unto us in increasing vigour every day we live.

Bless us all here before Thee, O Lord! Be with us as we are gathered in Thy presence this evening; and help us as we try to speak a word in Thy name; direct our thoughts and give us wisdom according to the needs of this gathered congregation. We pray that Thou wouldst ever be with us in all our meetings and direct us in all our need and in all our ways as Christians, in the fear and the love of the Saviour.

Be in every heart, and let Thy kingdom come in each spirit; that from us the word of the Lord may sound out, and that men, seeing us, may take knowledge that at least we have been with Jesus; and let Thy Gospel preached among us have free course and be glorified, and prove its power by drawing souls out of darkness into Thy marvellous light.

We pray Thee to bless any absent ones this evening, any dear to us that are in sorrow or sickness. Comfort all mourning hearts, make Thyself known to them as the Healer and the Helper; if it please Thee, manifest Thyself as blessing the means used for restoration; and graciously grant that peace that comes from Thine own presence, that even whilst the outward man is suffering the inward man may be in light and rest.

We pray Thee to bless all the households here represented this evening, and the children of the families of Thy people, and grant that they may grow up to love and serve Thee; and that every home to which we belong may be a house of God and a gate of heaven; one of the dwellings of the righteous wherein every heart is a melody of joy and rejoicing.

Now, O Lord, we desire to commit ourselves to Thy gracious care with humble thankfulness for all past blessings and mercies, and humbly hoping that Thou, who hast

been our Helper, wilt not leave us nor forsake us until Thou hast done all that Thou hast spoken to us of here. Guide and keep us, ever be near us, and strengthen us to live soberly, righteously, godly, in this present evil world; for the sake of Christ our Saviour.

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LXI.

O LORD our God, we bless Thee that we can think of Thee as the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Thou art Light. In Thee is no darkness at all; from Thee is pure and holy and perfect good. We bless Thee that whatsoever cometh from Thee is good and perfect, and that no sin or sorrow hath its source in Thee; even when Thy Providence useth sorrow as chastisement to drive us from sin. Thou wouldst rather give, and give only, the things that make us blessed. But Thou dost desire most of all that we should be holy, and therefore sometimes Thy tenderest love sends things that we call evil; but we thank Thee that they are not to make us sad only. We thank Thee that there is no cloud or darkness with Thee, from whom the thunders come; we thank Thee that Thou temptest no man to evil. When Thou triest us, Thou dost infinitely desire that we should stand the trial, and art ever waiting and willing to help us; making the way of escape when Thou sendest the trial, that we may be able to bear it.

So we come to Thee this evening and desire to bring thanksgiving, for Thy mercy endureth for ever; and day unto day gives only Thy infinite love. And we are here before Thee this evening to bless Thee for all the good things which Thou hast lavished on all our outward lives, and for the better things which Thou dost give to the spirit; and most of all, for the best gift which Thou keepest to the last.

We thank Thee for the mercies revealed and for those unrevealed, we bless Thee for all Thou hast taught us of Thyself and for all Thou hast not taught us: we thank Thee for the light which streams down from Thee and for the unseen fountain from which it comes. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst help us day by day to treasure in grateful hearts all the revelations of Thy love which Thou dost give us in our daily circumstances, and the still better ones which Thou givest in the unchanging message of Thy Son, the same for every day.

We pray that we may find new meanings, and new faith, and new possessions, and glory, and joy, in that Gospel which from of old has been preached to us; and we ask Thee that the things with which we are most familiar in Thy word may be precious to us—no lapse of time wearing away their power for us, no familiarity with them deadening our sense of Thy wonderful love. May we ever press nearer and nearer to the enriched fulness in Christ; may all our past be but to us as the beginning of days, and as a kind of first-fruit of what Thou dost give us; and may we find according to our need, as the days pass on and our years increase, and with some of us our necessities seem greater; may we find that, as our day, so shall be our strength, for Thy word does not perish with the using, but grows greater to them that have used it. So may we find that unto him that hath shall be given, and that inexhaustible fulness flows to us from the ancient fountains from which we have drunk so long.

We thank Thee that we can come to Thee with all consciousness of our weakness and sin upon us, and yet be sure that Thou dost forgive and accept and art ready to help and strengthen us. Be Thou near us then, we beseech Thee, whensoever we are most aware of our own slothfulness in the Divine life, and of the strong temptations that bind us down to this world. May we gain the

victory over these by the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony. May the assurance of Thy pardoning mercy ever be near to us and ever be the strongest reason with us for fleeing from sin. May we learn our own evil yet more profoundly because we believe that Thou hast forgiven us, and turned Thyself from the fierceness of Thine anger; may our consciences be made more susceptible as our fears diminish, and may we grow every day in abhorrence of whatever separates us from Thee, and in keenest perception of the faults and failings in our own characters; and if there be anything—as surely there is—in the ordering of our lives, contrary to Thy holy will, and which escapes our knowledge, we pray that Thou wouldst reveal even this unto us.

And make us, we beseech Thee, to hunger and thirst after righteousness so much that we shall be willing to accept any discipline of Thine which may help us to a firmer hold of the righteousness of Christ, and to a more unerring conformity to His image. May we not wish to keep any evil; may we not fear to part with anything that is ours; may we be able and willing to give up all for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. May we sacrifice ourselves, and all within us that is false and selfish and sinful, in order that the better life of Jesus Christ may flow into our renewed nature.

We thank Thee, O Lord! that Thou givest liberally;—we have proof of this—so we thank Thee that Thou givest without upbraiding, though Thou mightest upbraid all our unworthy use of Thy benefits, and our poor returns of thankfulness unto Thee; but we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst help us, whenever we know our nature, to ask from Thee, the giving God, in faith, nothing wavering; and then do Thou fulfil Thy gracious promises and bestow upon us all that we require. We want wisdom, whither shall we go but unto Thee? The fear of the Lord is the

beginning of wisdom; strengthen then, in us, that fear which has no torment, but is the sister and the friend of love.

And do Thou help us, we pray Thee, as we pass on through life, to do so with careful observance of ourselves; and comparing and contrasting our own characters with Thy revealed will, that we may not see ourselves, as in the glass of Thy word, and go away forgetting what manner of men we were; but may we ever be of those doers of Thy word that shall be blessed in their deed.

Help us, we pray Thee, in all our weakness, day by day, that we may be strengthened by the strength of Him that died for our forgiveness and lives for our sanctification; and may the fear of Jesus Christ in our hearts mould our characters visibly to all who look upon us, after the pattern of Him that loved us. Go with us, we beseech Thee, through all the various occupations and circumstances of life. We need Thee at every passing moment, we need Thee in every changing scene; days roll away and bear our lives with them; we need Thee in the day and in the dark, we never get beyond the need of Thy grace, blessed be Thy Name, we never get beyond the reach of Thy loving hand. Go then, we pray Thee, with us through all our life; fit us for Thy holy will, strengthen us to do it and bear it; may patience and submission be our peace; may our hearts be ready for all Thy purposes, and to us may there ever be known the joy of those whose wills are bowed to Thy will. Take care of us and of all that are dear to us, and bless them as they may severally require; go with them wherever they may go, and watch over all our loved ones in their various circumstances this evening. We desire to commend to Thee the friends that are absent from our communion. We pray that any who may be in any kind of sorrow may have Thy gracious presence and sustaining help; be with the sick, if any there be of Thy people, and

let Thy holy love and Thy gentle consolation uphold them; and do Thou strengthen all that are in any kind of trouble, that in them there may be wrought out the visible fruit of righteousness.

And now we pray Thee to bless us here before Thee; we thank Thee that Thou dost permit us to gather again thus. We pray that Thy grace may ever be felt by us when we are met together on these evenings, snatching an hour from the cares and duties of life to draw near to God.

We bless Thee for all the past revelations of Thy love and goodness which Thou hast made to us under such circumstances, and beseech Thee that Thou wouldst be with us still; and help us this evening to hear and to speak Thy holy word.

Let Thy grace be upon us in all our relationships as a congregation, guide and direct us in all our ways, deliver us from perplexities and show us what Thy will may be concerning us. Lead us, holding by Thy hand, and help us without sin to know what God the Lord would have us to do. And do Thou pour out Thy Spirit upon us and let the Spirit of the Lord abide in the ordinances of His Church amongst us, gathering in many unto the kingdom by these services and building up many in the faith as it is in Jesus.

We beseech Thee to hear us, we pray for pardoning mercy, and ask Thee now to accept and bless us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

β.

LXII.

O LORD, our merciful Father, who art ever ready to hear us, and dost haste to help us when we draw near to Thee; let our souls follow hard after Thee; may we never feel as though Thou wert far away from us, and dim and indistinct. And to our faith and love may no difficulties

in apprehending Thy nature, and no consciousness of the distance between us and Thee, and no remembrance that we are before the Unknown, ever keep us from knowing that Thou art verily our living Father, who art acquainted with all our ways and art closer to us than our very lives, and art more truly with us than any other creature is. We thank Thee that in all our weakness and sinfulness, and even when we are most weighed down by the things of Time, that the thought of Thee brings us near to Thyself. We thank Thee that when we are most apt to be worsted in the conflict with our own evil and are ready to fall, yielding to the lusts of this present and forgetting Thee, one glance toward Thee brings strength to our wavering nature, and plants our feet upon a rock. We thank Thee for all the deliverance which Thou hast so often given to them that cry to Thee in the thick of the battle, though their cry were faint, if their faith laid hold upon Thee. Surely if we are straitened it is because we ask amiss, and not because Thy mercies are clean gone for ever, and Thy hands are shut up against us. We thank Thee that whatever of Christian grace has been given to Thy servants in time past, it has not been because of any man's right, and that they may be visited upon us too. And we pray that each of us, in the several struggles of our daily life, and in all our conflicts with temptation and unbelief and worldliness, may always have Thy power granted to us, and Thy mighty grace flowing into our hearts, which will make us more than conquerors through Him that loveth us.

We would not pray Thee to make the battle easier, for Thou knowest best what is best for us; but we pray that it may never prove too hard for us nor go against us. And if at any time we seem to be near defeat, we pray that that may only drive us to Thee, who teachest our hands to war and our fingers to fight.

We come to Thee with humble thanksgiving for Thy

great providence and loving wondrous care exerted over us all. We know not each other's inmost history, and we can understand but little of the reasons that others have to praise Thee; but we have each enough in our own memories to make us thankful beyond all words. And we pray Thee that our eyes may be enlightened to behold more of the greatness of Thy Providence; and observing these things may we be indeed wise to understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. And we pray Thee to help us to keep fast hold of that conviction, not to let it go, for it is our life. May we ever feel sure, in spite of all in our own history, or in the history of others, which might seem to point to an opposite conclusion, that Thou doest all things well.

And if any of us have to carry any special perplexity and burden, may we be directed in our difficulties; and though we may be hedged in, brought even to the end of our resources, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst strengthen us not to cast away our confidence, nor ever to doubt that it hath, as well as shall have, great recompense of reward.

We bless Thee for all reward Thou dost give day by day, and in the difficulties and duties and changing circumstances of life to Thy servants that trust in Thee. Let our faith be as firm as the faith ought to be that is fixed upon so faithful a God. Help us to make our confidence like unto Thee,—infinite, unchangeable, everlasting.

We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst mercifully forget all evil Thou hast seen in us; and, O Lord, teach us better than we know now, how unworthy we are of the least of Thy benefits, and draw our hearts away even from ourselves now—away from self-confidence, to rest wholly upon Thee according to the mercy of the all-sufficient word of Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom may we find our Strength and our Righteousness. May our souls be

brought nearer and nearer to Him in daily life; may our thoughts ever turn more hopefully to that Lord, and always find in Him gladsomeness and cleansing. May it ever be with us a joy to feel that we are following Christ's footsteps. May all that is difficult become less difficult in our lives because we have fellowship with Christ's sufferings. And may that solemn thought be reiterated in the experience of each of us, that if we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him. How small and light and trivial our sufferings seem then! We thank Thee that in the least of them we are not alone, but our Master is with us. O Lord! direct us in all our ways, we need Thy counsel at every moment; our own minds are dark and cloudy, and our own voices and wills too often rise up to cloud and confuse our understandings as to the meaning of Thy providences; but we pray Thee to keep us detached and withdrawn from earthly desires, and filled with grace and peace,—that our souls may be all one patient waiting for God, and so may we be led step by step into life and liberty.

Preserve us from setting our hearts' affection on anything that can perish. Preserve us from seeking to force Thy providences into our own paths. Preserve us from impatience, and precipitation, and unbelief, and unthankfulness, from regretful looks backward and despairing looks forward; and help us to keep our hearts close to Thee that we may learn wisdom. And in all our daily work, great or small, whatever duties may devolve upon us, be Thou near to help us and bless us; and out of our barrenness bring fruit which shall be seen after many days, to Thy praise and glory, and to our own blessedness.

And now we desire to commend one another to Thee; we pray that Thou wouldst watch over and keep us. Be in the households of Thy servants, and grant that the families of Thy Church may be indeed houses of God and gates of

heaven. And graciously pour out Thy Spirit upon us whensoever we assemble for worship, and direct all our supplications. And grant that the word of the Lord among us may have free course and be glorified, and that here many may be gathered into Thy kingdom, and the souls of Thy servants steadily built up in Thy most holy faith.

Pour out Thy Spirit, O Lord, upon every member of this Church and congregation, and grant that truth and holiness may be manifest in our service and our life before all men.

And now, O Lord, we desire to commit ourselves to Thee. We beseech Thee to be with us and bless us; help us to wait here before Thee; let Thy truth be given to us to speak, and may it enter into all our hearts, and there prosper in the thing whereunto Thou hast sent it.

Hear and bless us now, and mercifully accept us with full forgiveness of all our sins, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

β.

LXIII.

O LORD, our loving Father, who art ever ready to hear us when we call upon Thee, and art swift to answer and plenteous in mercy to all that invoke Thy Name, look upon us, we beseech Thee, as we gather ourselves here, desiring to turn away for an hour from the engrossing thoughts and purposes of this present, and to renew our vision of Thyself and deepen our convictions of the greatness and preciousness of the treasures which Thou hast. We would thank Thee for all Thy merciful dealing with us. Thou hast borne our evil manners all these years, and Thy loving-kindness has never varied, and Thy patience never failed. Thou hast Thyself been like what Thou hast bidden Thy servants be, gentle, patient, ever ready to

instruct even them that oppose themselves to Thee; to draw away from the captivity of sin they who are led captive thereby.

And we bless Thee for all Thou hast done for us, and for Thy wonderful loving-kindness and gracious providences; even when wrapped in darkness and seeming mysterious to many of us. Many of Thy former disguised blessings have already vindicated themselves, in our experience and memories, to be good and right; and so many blessings from the beginning have been plain and clear. Blessed be Thy Name! what Thou hast given to us and shown us of Thyself makes us quite sure that "all things work together for good to them that love Thee;" though it may be sometimes hard for us to see it, and harder still to feel it, and with thankful hearts to acknowledge it. But we bless Thee that it is only the fault of our own love to Thee if any of Thy providences have seemed to do us harm and not good. It is our fault and not Thine, and the more we get to know Thee the more truly and deeply we love Thee, and the more clearly do all things co-operate for one great end: to make us more like Thyself.

Thou art ever drawing us to Thyself by changing circumstances and vicissitudes. Sorrows and joys alike teach us how much we need Thee. The passing away of friends shows us more clearly than we otherwise would see the blessedness of an eternal Friend and Helper.

And we bless Thee if, through all this fleeting scene, we have ever been able to catch glimpses of the Sun that stands steadfast in the heavens, behind the passing clouds that fly across its face, and is looking calmly over all.

We pray Thee to look upon us and graciously help us to draw close to Thee with true hearts. If we have had any burden of care, or any cowedness and deadness of spirit, or if our minds have been so much occupied with the necessary concerns of this life to-day,—concerns which

only become sinful when we are so much absorbed in them that they prevent us from thinking of Thee as we ought,—take away all disturbing thoughts, and help us for a season to come into Thy presence, and realize that there is nothing that prevents us from coming to Thee, and nothing within us that we would desire to hide from Thee.

We thank Thee that we can pour out our hearts before Thee, and we bless Thee that we do not need to be afraid of asking that the searching gaze of Thy pure eyes may be directed upon us, to find out anything that is not pure and good and right. And if Thou dost look upon us, through Thy dear Son, the look will scatter the evil and make us holier and purer and better.

We pray Thee that Thou wouldst, in Thy mercy, bend down Thy heavens and draw near to each of us before Thee now; and if we are aware of any sin in ourselves or fault in our ordering of our lives, or any tendency or undue desire for the things that perish which may have been interfering with our prime seeking after the Kingdom of Christ and His righteousness; we pray that such an enemy may lose its power over us as we worship before Thee, and may be left at the foot of the mountain whilst we ascend towards Thee.

We bless Thee that, with all our burden of sins and shortcomings, we can still draw near to Thee, and lift up our hearts to Thee. Send to us help from Thy Sanctuary, some message from Thy gracious Spirit, and strengthen us from Thy Zion. Give us higher thoughts of Thee, a clearer conception of Thine own inestimable sweetness and graciousness, a happy and strong confidence in Thy more than Fatherly friendship and love. Teach us to trust Thee truly, and to find in our inmost hearts that it is a good thing to wait upon the Lord, and that the men that trust in Him are blessed.

Take away from us, we beseech Thee, all our faults and

evils; and reveal to us day by day by the processes of Thy providences, by the experience that we get in the daily conflict with evil, and by our increased conformity to Thy Word and submission to Thy Spirit—reveal to us all that is faulty and defective in our characters; and the things that we do not know to be faults and shortcomings do Thou show to us, disclosing to our inmost hearts any evil that is there, and showing us everything that keeps us from running with patience and joyfulness in the way of Thy commands.

We beseech Thee, O Lord! to help us in our duties and circumstances in this world, in our family relationships, in our intercourse with men around us, in all our public and private capacities and engagements, in daily work, and in whatever Thy Providence gives us to do; may we set the Lord always before us, and make it a conscientious duty to try to live every moment with a constant reference of ourselves and everything we do and wish, to Thy will and to Christ's pattern. We pray Thee that the more manifest things of His Gospel may be in all our lives, that the Word of the Lord may sound out from us; and even as Thy glory shines in the silent heavens, where there is no speech nor language, so we pray Thee that our lives, like stars, may shine with reflected light from the great Sun of Righteousness, and may pour out His light into the darkness about us, and may draw by their beams some men to Thyself.

We pray that Thou wouldst bless us as we are here this evening. Give us the message from Thyself and words that shall be true and helpful, seasonable and profitable. Thou knowest our varying natures and our different temptations; and we pray that Thy grace may be shaped so that by the manifestation of Thy truth we may all have our due portion in due season. Bless the impoverished in Thy house and satisfy Thy poor. We pray for Thy mercy

whenever we gather for worship. Let the Word of the Lord be manifest among us, and Thy Gospel be instrumental in building up many in the most holy faith. May Thy Kingdom come and be deepened in our hearts, and may we who profess to be Christians be indeed Christ's men and His faithful servants, remembering the solemn words: that if we suffer with Him we shall also be glorified with Him, and if we deny Him before men He also will deny us.

But we bless Thee also that we have the consolation, too, of believing that, however faithless and unbelieving we may be, He cannot deny Himself; He is faithful and steadfast. Help us then, we pray Thee, to abstain from all those fleshful lusts that bind us down, that we may be "vessels unto honour," sanctified and not unworthy to be touched by the Master's lips.

O Lord! bless all whom we should remember here before Thee. If there be any who—either present or absent—are in any kind of sorrow or trouble, comfort and sustain them all. Into sick chambers let Thy messages of peace and patience come; and whether Thy Providence shall think it best to bless the means used for the restoration to health of those that are sick, or whether Thou deemest it best to order otherwise; above all, grant, we beseech Thee, that in the hearts of all who are drawing near to the hands of Death, and fighting with sore weakness and suffering of body, Thy grace may be granted; and the love and the joy of the Lord may be strengthened in weakness, and life may come in the act of death.

O Lord! we would commend ourselves to Thy care now; and beseech Thee to be near and help us as we worship this evening. Blessed be Thy Name for all the mercies we have received as we have joined ourselves together in past times; still continue Thy goodness, we pray Thee, and be near us and bless us now, and let Thy

Word be our joy and our strength, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

B.

LXIV

O LORD our everlasting and gracious Father, who art ever ready to hear us, and though Thou dwellest in the thick darkness dost yet come near to us,—

Give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We would come by that new and living Way and thank Thee that He who is the Way is likewise the High Priest, by whose intercession we can draw near. We bless Thee for Him who offered His one sacrifice for sins for ever. And we thank Thee that He hath passed within the veil and there remains to make it possible for our sinful feet to tread that path, and for our dim eyes to behold Thy glory. And now we would come and pray for grace to fix all our thoughts and affections upon Jesus Christ alone. May we feel that all our unworthiness and sinfulness is forgiven and is cleansed in and by Him. May we feel that our poor prayers, when we present them now, are made fragrant by much incense of His sacrifice. And since we know not what we should ask for and know not how to ask for it as we ought, may we all rest ourselves for acceptance upon Christ alone, and feel that we have an Advocate with the Father.

Most humbly, O Lord! we come to Thee, with many a sin, much weakness, many transgressions in outward conduct to acknowledge, and with much in our hearts and thoughts which we dare not confess to Thee in words, which we sometimes scarcely dare look at ourselves; but we pray Thee that Thou wouldst teach us more and more truly what we are; and bow us down from all our self-confidence by wholesome knowledge of the deceitfulness and unreliableness of our best resolves and our highest

moments of being. May we ever walk warily, as knowing that we ourselves are not to be trusted in slippery places; and that we are weaker in our own strength than the weakest temptation that comes to us. But, O Lord! we thank Thee that whilst we recognise our own sinfulness, and the deep firm hold that many an evil and many a transgression has upon us, we can lose our fears in the thought of Thee; and that we have in Christ our Saviour One who will strengthen us with might by His Spirit in the inner man, and make us fit for everything which Thy Providence calls upon us to do, to bear, or to be.

We bless Thee, O Lord! for all Thy gracious help to Thy servants, whom Thou dost not send to warfare at their own charges, for Thou dost give to all them who trust Thee all that they need. We thank Thee that Thou hast never left us to work obedience to Thy commandments in our own strength. We thank Thee for all power equal to our need that has been granted to us whensoever we have waited upon Thee for it; and we know and would confess that if ever we have been pressed hard with tasks too great for us, or have met with temptations too strong to resist—their strength mightier than we, we have cast away our Strength and have forsaken the Rock of our salvation.

Do Thou help us then, we pray Thee, day by day, that we may ever live near to Thee; and in all changing circumstances may we ever feel Thy present help round about us as a wall of fire, and Thy strength and glory dwelling in the midst of us—a light within.

Strengthen us for all service; may it be service with gladness; may we do the things which Thou dost lay upon us to do, willingly. Teach us how to subdue our own inclinations if they are contrary to Thy plain Providence; teach us how to understand and interpret Thy will from the circumstances around us; may we not make any mis-

takes or fall into any errors touching even the smallest things of our daily life; may we have from Thee that single eye which shall see Thy guiding hand; and that ear purged from earthly noises which shall apprehend and obey the whispers of Thy will. May we always be ready when Thou dost call; may we always—as the eyes of a servant are towards his master—have our eyes fixed upon Thee, in mute and patient observance of the first signal of Thine hand. So may we be ready, ready for life, ready for death, ready for His coming. In all things may we set the Lord before us; and being close by His side may we not be moved.

And we beseech Thee, O Lord! that Thou wouldst in Thy great love regard each of us here before Thee, according to all the different relationships and circumstances of our earthly lives. Bless the households of Thy people, the families and the children of these families; and grant, we beseech Thee, that in all the homes where we dwell there may be the common faith in the one Lord, and the common possession of a common salvation.

And give Thy servants before Thee, who are parents, grace to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they may be not easily provoked to anger nor discouraged. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst bless us in all our different work; be with each of us in daily tasks. Howsoever different these may be in outward appearance, we thank Thee that we can all do them from the same motive and do them all for the same Lord and by the same strength. May it be so that everywhere, and howsoever occupied, we can still be in the house of the Lord, and still doing the Father's will. May we be in His house and about His business wheresoever we are, and whatsoever our hands find to do. And do Thou prosper us according to Thy wisdom in regard to outward things; but above all help us to yield our conscious desires to

Thee, and to find that all which Thou dost will is acceptable and perfect.

Keep us through fleeting days, keep us for the eternal day; and bring us there where no clouds follow and no night comes.

And now, O Lord! bless us as we are gathered here, and let Thy love be upon us as we try to worship together, and to speak some words in Thy name. Let Thy gracious Spirit direct us, and do Thou give to us some message that may be helpful and profitable to those that hear; and do Thou, in like manner, be with us whensoever we assemble together in all our worship. Let Thy presence be felt; guide us as a people and as a congregation. Help us to do Thy will; direct us in all circumstances; make our path plain before us, and help us to understand what the will of the Lord is, and to do it gladly. Prosper Thy work among us, and let the Kingdom of Christ be deepened in all our hearts, and so extended that some may come who have not yet obeyed Him. And let Thy Spirit accompany the truth, in whatsoever work we are engaged, in our public or private characters; in all efforts in which, collectively or individually, we are engaged.

And now we desire to commend ourselves to Thy gracious care, with the prayer that Thy abiding and supporting presence may be granted to all who are afflicted in mind or in circumstances; and with humble thanksgiving for all past mercies and humble confidence that Thou who hast been our Helper wilt still be near; be with us and bless us.

Hear and accept us now, and answer our applications for the sake of Christ our Saviour.

β.

LXV.

O LORD, our ever gracious and most merciful Father, nearest to bless us whensoever we call, nearest to bless us

even when we are far away from Thee, and ever glad to welcome the faintest motions of return in our treacherous hearts; we approach Thee now in that great Name which is above every name, and pray that all our hope and desire may be fixed upon Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us, and therefore is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

In that great and living Way give us grace ever to tread; by that one blessed Mediator and Saviour strengthen us always to approach unto Thee; and since Thou in Him hast drawn near to the whole world of sinful men, may we in Him yield to Thy drawings and come nigh unto Thee. And then, O Lord! we beseech Thee, out of Thine infinite fulness which Thou hast stored and treasured for us in Jesus Christ, supply our need.

Thou hast taught us large desires and expectations; Thou hast encouraged us to open our mouths wide; we never can ask so much as Thou hast declared Thyself ready to give, for our poor minds can never grasp the whole fulness of blessing which Thou art waiting to bestow upon us, according to our faith and our need.

So we beseech Thee that Thine own promise to us may be our petition to Thee. Supply all our needs, we beseech Thee, according to "Thy riches in glory in Christ Jesus." All our need is more than our knowledge, deeper than our consciousness. We do not understand all that we have to draw from Thee, but we know that for life and breath and all things, greatest and smallest alike, for the blessings of this moment and for the blessings of the future; for the blessings of the nearest future—the instant that becomes the present while we speak—and for the blessings of the furthest off future beyond the grave, we must equally trust in Thee, and in Thee only.

Deliver us, we pray Thee then, from all dreams of satisfying all our necessities, or fulfilling any of our desires,

except in Thyself; and do Thou graciously replenish our emptiness from out of Thy fulness, and out of Thy wisdom make us wise, and with Thy strength make us strong; and give to us Thy righteousness to cover all our sinfulness, and Thy pardoning mercy to blot out all our transgressions, and Thy good Spirit to bide ever in our hearts.

Deliver Thou, we beseech Thee, by Thy manifold and merciful providences and gifts of grace, at once our souls from death, our eyes from tears, our feet from falling. Be Thou the Saviour of our souls; be Thou the Provider of our lot; be Thou the Strength and Righteousness of our spirits. We thank Thee that we need not to dwell in any dry land where no water is when we have Thee beside us. We bless Thee that in all times of darkness Thy light is near, and we have in some measure experienced the faithfulness of Thy promise: that if in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, we make known our requests to Thee, then Thy peace will dwell in our hearts. Keep every mind and heart here in Jesus Christ; strengthen us, we pray Thee, evermore to cast our whole burden upon Thyself; and whatsoever we may wish or desire, whatsoever our sanguine hopes may have planned, whatsoever we may think we need, give us grace to refer it all to Thee, and in patient continuance in well-doing to commit the keeping of ourselves to Thee as to a faithful Creator.

So deliver us, we beseech Thee, from anxious care and carking thought; keep us through all murmurings and discontent. May we, like Thy servant, learn "in all things both to be full and to suffer need;" and whatsoever vicissitudes of Providence Thy wise counsels and loving hand may choose to guide us into, or through, may we learn "in whatsoever state we are, therewith" and therein "to be content."

And strengthen us, we beseech Thee, that our religion may not only lie in submission of our inward life to Thee,

but may also be manifested in plain and obvious godliness and goodness. May we adorn our spirits with all things that are fair and lovely; may our lives be made strong and noble by all things that are venerable and of good report. To us may every virtue which is given by the grace of Thy dear Son in men's hearts belong; and may the praise which is worth having—the praise of Him who gives it at the last—be ours.

We beseech Thee for strength to live soberly, righteously, godly, gathering ourselves together, fulfilling our obligations to all around us; and in all, thinking of Thee and seeking to please Thee. May we be able, by Thy strength, to overcome the world, as that great Conqueror in whom we trust overcame it, by simple Son-like obedience and self-sacrifice.

May we too in Christ's victory have our share, and receive through His blood redemption, even the remission of our sins; may we receive, through His immortal life, the Spirit that was in Him, to make us like our Master.

May it be enough for us who are disciples to be as our Master, and may nothing else be enough. May we live ever seeking to be more and more like unto our Lord; and in all holy obedience and patient well-doing, in all submissiveness to Thy will, and in love to our brethren, may we ever keep, for His dear sake who died upon the cross, the pattern that He ever set before us, and tread in His steps.

O Lord! may we, all of us, ever hear, singing in our ears for evermore, His word: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." And may our love keeping His commandments find that in the keeping of them there is great reward; and that nothing is so blessed as the joy of obedience and communion.

Regard us, we beseech Thee, as we are here before Thee this evening. We would wait in Thy presence and pray that Thy good Spirit may be ours as we worship here.

Give us, we beseech Thee, some message to speak to Thy servants that may be full of hope and strength for them; and may we, all of us assembled thus, with one heart wait upon the Lord who teaches, and find Him to be a Lord that heals. Accompany, we pray Thee, evermore the message of Thy grace with Thine own good Spirit influencing us as a congregation. Let Thy love ever abide, and do Thou give to Thy Word power amongst us. Grant that it may go conquering and to conquer, in many hearts.

We pray for all who may be absent from our midst this evening. We beseech Thee, too, for any of them that are detained by personal affliction, or sickness of those dear to them; and we beseech Thee that in all sick chambers Thy presence may be felt; and that in all sad homes and sad hearts the Light that makes even darkness light about us may be realized.

We desire to commend ourselves to Thee now. We thank Thee for all Thy great goodness to us in the past; we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst confer upon each of us according to our different circumstances and daily duties, and strengthen us for them all, and fit us for Thy holy will concerning us. And bless all Christian men and women with like blessings; and upon the whole Israel of God, of every name and communion, may Thy great mercy and peace abide.

Hear us now, we beseech Thee, in Thy love hear us, and in Thy pity answer, in Thy long-suffering forgive us, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

β.

LXVI.

O LORD, our merciful Father, we thank Thee that when we come to Thee we have the peaceful confidence that

Thou knowest all our wants before we ask Thee; and that Thou dost not desire that we should speak to Thee in order to tell Thee our wants, nor even to ask Thee to have mercy upon us, but only that our own faith may be increased and that our desires may be purified.

Bestow Thou upon us, then, we pray Thee, all things needful, not only for this passing present life that now is, but for that deeper and Diviner life that is cherished beneath the life of the flesh, and is destined to be triumphant over it. And we pray Thee that Thou wouldst help us all by Thine own Spirit in our hearts, to live crucifying the flesh, with its affections and lusts; and ever put to death the old life of nature and of self, with the better one born of God, and sustained by communication with the life and the Spirit of Christ, made strong in each of us.

Help us, O Lord, thus to die daily, to be partakers of Christ's death, and to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings, that the life also of Christ may be manifest in our mortal bodies.

Aid us to subdue all disorders that conflict with Thy highest purposes, help us to keep in restraint all tastes and tendencies, to enjoy in moderation all the pleasures allowable to us here upon earth; and whatsoever we may find of duty, or of danger, or of suffering, or of delight here below, may we all hear that voice calling upon us to arise above ourselves and to enter into fellowship with Thee. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst graciously look down upon us while we are before Thee this morning and in our various duties and relationships in life; bestow upon us Thy gracious help and the teaching of Thy Spirit and the wisdom that is from above; show us what Thy will is concerning us.

May we be equal to learning the lessons Thou wouldst teach us; may no unwillingness stand in the way of our receiving Thy word as the law of our lips. In all our re-

lationships may we have strength given to us to witness for Thee; in all our changing circumstances may we desire the unchanging will of the ever-living Father.

When the sorrows fall upon our paths let us have Thy light, and Thy patience granted to us when they pass. Whatsoever burdens we may have, of care, of anxiety, or of sad memories that can never be effaced and never changed, do Thou strengthen us for them. Whatsoever burdens we may have of present duty, do Thou give us grace to bear these.

Look down upon any before Thee who may be in any special kind of trouble or temptation or distress to-day. Thou knowest all hearts! Wherever there are sad ones let Thy presence be felt; and whatsoever be the wound or the sorrow, may Thy gracious hand lay hold upon them and tenderly bear them up.

We pray for all who are absent to-day; and especially for those who are in sickness, or pain, or watching, it may be, by the side of the sick bed. Be with all those who thus are tried, and breathe Thy grace into their hearts; and if it be Thy will that the outward man may perish, let the inward man be renewed day by day.

Comfort the sorrowful, if there be any in the households of this congregation, draw near unto all according to their need, and hear us when we cry.

We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst bless all those whom we should remember before Thee. We pray for the Sovereign and all who are in authority; we thank Thee that Thou hast stayed the ravages of the sword. We pray Thee that peace may be perpetuated, and we pray that all men may be drawn more and more to the love and adoration of Him who is the Prince of Peace. In Thine own time break Thou the bow and cut the spear in sunder, and cast the chariot into the fire, and let the nations learn the curse of war no more.

We beseech Thee for Thy blessing on our service, let Thy truth be on our lips, help us to speak some words in Thy name that may not be deemed pointless by any that hear them. Guide our thoughts, deliver us from all false conception of Thy Word, and destroy all unworthy motives in hearing and speaking it; and whensoever we gather ourselves together here, let Thy grace be with us even more abundantly in the future than in the past. We thank Thee for the days gone by, and we beseech Thee that here Thou shouldst abide with us still, and here place the brightness of Thy Name, and fill Thy poor with bread.

And now, O Lord, we commend ourselves to Thy gracious care; forgive, we beseech Thee, our many sins, and in Thy love and mercy receive and keep us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

β.

LXVII.

O LORD, our almighty Father, who art high above all thoughts and blessings; who art yet near to all humble desire, and seeking love, and sense of need; we would come to Thee this morning to bless Thee for all past loving-kindness and tender care, and to pray for the renewal of Thy mercies to us in our renewed association together here, in working for Thee. Let Thy blessing be with us in all our future, and grant that whensoever we assemble together here, the Lord may be in the midst of us.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that we can say to our soul that Thou art true, Thou art right; our Refuge and our Deliverance; Thou art our Buckler and the Horn of our salvation, and our high Tower. We can make our own the experience, the trembling experience, of Thy servant whose ancient and ever-fresh words we have been reading together. Thou wilt hear our cry when we call upon Thee, and our feeble voice has entered into Thine ear; and Thou

wilt send Thy might to deliver us, and to save us from the hands of our enemies who were too strong for us. Thou hast compassed us about with many mercies; Thou hast lavished upon us the wonders of grace and goodness; Thy tender Providence has never been at fault; Thy grace has never known exhaustion of its resources; all our wants Thou hast supplied,—many of them Thou hast anticipated,—and if ever Thou hast brought us apparently to the end of our resources, it is that Thou mayest teach us what fulness there is in Thee, and how surely Thine hand is bending, with fulness of blessing in it, for all that look to Thee.

Keep us, then, in patient waiting at Thy feet, with the sure confidence that we cannot wait in vain. We thank Thee for all which Thy benefits to each of us have revealed to us, of Thine eternal character and unchanging purposes; and we beseech Thee, O Lord, that day by day, as Thou dost unfold, portion by portion, the wondrous scheme of Thy designs concerning each of us, our faith may learn all the lessons which Thou dost reveal; and may trust Thee for all that Thy merciful hand covers unseen.

We bless Thee that we need not to take care for the morrow, seeing that we are encompassed about with Thine infinite prevision. Take care of each of us, then, O Lord, and help us to cast all our burdens on the Lord our God; and we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst strengthen each of us to seek with deeper earnestness and more intense desire to find the righteousness and the kingdom of God.

O Lord! may we long more to be like Thyself, and cherish in our deepest hearts a more ardent desire for all things fair and of good report, with which Thou dost clothe those that keep near Thee.

Purge us, we beseech Thee, from every fault and error, lift up our hearts from all their low-thoughted care; deliver us from the self-will that runs through so much that we do

and purpose; keep us with a single eye fixed upon the unseen, upon the infinite all-sufficiency of our Father God.

May our hearts, and the best of our energies, be turned away from the things that pass and perish, and be fixed and fastened on Thee alone. Help us, we pray Thee, thus to be less of the world and of time, not holding our happiness at the mercy of their changes, nor drawing our law from the maxims and examples of those around us. To us may it be an all-sufficient treasure to have Thee; to us may it be an all-sufficient endowment to love the will of Jesus Christ. And we beseech Thee that, whereinsoever, by reason of our weaknesses of understanding or over-willingness of obedience, we may err in our knowledge of Thy will, Thou wouldst teach us better what we ought to be. Surely there is no blessedness except the blessedness of doing Thy commandments, and so walking in the light of Thy face.

We pray Thee, then, that Thou wouldst help us all, with unflinching and unchanging resolution, and with inward striving and diligence, to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and whatsoever things we fail of apprehending or of doing, may the Lord reveal even this unto us, and the Lord help us to perform it.

For all our past sin we come to Him in whom is forgiveness, and pray that we may have redemption through His blood, and be cleansed from all our iniquities.

Bless each of us here before Thee this morning; let Thy love abide upon us as we worship in Thy presence; in Thy great mercy forgive all our manifold infirmities and sins, even in our approach to Thee; and reveal Thyself to us now, that our hearts may be glad; and all the treacherous sweetness and brightness of this present may fade away from the eye and the thought of us who see and know the glory that excelleth in Thine own love

We ask every blessing, with the acceptance of these our imperfect prayers, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Redeemer.

β.

LXVIII.

O LORD! help us here before Thee this morning to take for ours Thee; and from every heart may the cry, "Thou art my God!" ascend to Thee. Thou hast come near to each of us, we know, in wonderful fulness of love, and hast poured out surprising mercies upon all of us. The miracle of Thy long-suffering is daily repeated, and as the sunshine rises day after day on the earth, so Thy unspeakable and ever-fresh love pours out moment after moment. It is unpurchased and undeserved, beaming upon our cold hearts, to woo and win them into life and warmth and love.

We would come to Thee this morning, O Lord, desiring to renew before Thee our thanksgiving for Thy kindness to us. We have to take as ours the ancient words that we have been reading, and joyfully to acknowledge that Thy thoughts and loving-kindness to us-ward are many; more than the hairs of our head, and too many to be reckoned up or set in order before Thee. We thank Thee for all the rich experience whereby Thou dost flood our lives with gladness. We thank Thee for all Thy punctual blessings, which never come to any heart too late. We thank Thee for all Thy faithful promises, which have never proved a broken reed to any poor soul that hath leaned upon them. We thank Thee for all the knowledge of Thyself which is poured upon us through every gift of Thy universe, and is all gathered into one great voice and word in the Person and work of Thy dear Son. We thank Thee for the deliverance from our own sinfulness granted to us in Jesus Christ, for forgiveness and cleansing, for power

with holiness, and desires after righteousness. We thank Thee that life becomes a different thing to them who love and serve Thee in Thy Son. We thank Thee for the powers of the world to come, for all the energies which Thou dost give to men in Thy blessed and Divine Spirit. We thank Thee for outward means of grace, and for the bright hopes that fill the otherwise dark and cloudy future, and we pray that this day—we, the children of many mercies, compassed and bought by such large blessings, and with our lives filled with such demonstration of Thy presence and Thy care—may we all be able to come to Thy throne with glad and thankful hearts. Whatsoever burden any of us may have to carry, whether it be duties that seem to us too great for our unassisted strength, or whether it be of sorrows and anxieties that seem to us too dark and present to be ever borne alone, we beseech Thee that we may still praise Thee, for surely even our burden may teach us of Thee, and our sorrows may bring us fresh manifestations of Thyself, and the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

For all Thou hast been, O Lord, we would praise Thee. And now we ask Thee for grace to put our whole trust in Thyself, and to feel the power that comes from peaceful confidence flowing into our wicked natures, and the calm that follows submission and resignation granted to each of us.

O Lord, Thou knowest our manifold weaknesses, our many wants and sins. We desire to confess these before Thee. Truly, if we were to think only of ourselves, our hearts would fail us, and we dare not look up; but we bless Thee that Thou art mightier than our sin, that Thy love is older than transgression, and everlasting.

We thank Thee that we can find deliverance from the evils that cling to us most closely in Thine own dear Son; and we pray that Thou wouldst strengthen us all to shake

off the venomous beasts that may have fastened upon our lives, and by the influence of Thy dear Son's blood and sacrifice, and by the restorative grace of Thy Divine Spirit, may it be that we shall feel no harm; set us free from our own weaknesses, enlighten us to know Thee well; make us joyous, with bounding energies, to do Thy will, to us may it be gladness to obey, may it be peace to trust. Look down upon us here before Thee this morning, give to each of us the needful blessing as we wait here in Thy presence, forgive the sins that we have committed in the past, and take away out of our hearts all the evil results of these in our present character and disposition, making us pure and gracious, holy and gentle, wise and good, strong and brave, after the pattern of Him in whom is all our heaven, and from whom we would draw all our hope.

Hear us now, O Lord, we humbly beseech Thee; let Thy mercy be upon us this morning according as we hope in Thee; and give us all now of Thy rich blessing, for the sake of Christ our Saviour.

B.

LXIX.

O LORD, whom all creatures seek, though many of them know it not, and from whom all good gifts come, though often the receivers are ignorant of the source,—

We would lift up our hearts to Thee this morning, thankful that we can know the fountain of our blessedness, and beseeching Thee to help us, that all our desires and seekings after good may ever be turned to Thyself. Surely it is in Thy heart that all the love we know dwells, it is from Thy hand that all the gifts come that gladden and enrich us most; for it is Thy wisdom that must make us wise, and only as we are endowed with Thy righteousness shall we be pure. We are emptiness, and Thou art infinite fulness; we are but one great need, Thou art all-sufficiency.

Satisfy us, then, we beseech Thee, and, even in the process of satisfying, kindle within us new and larger desires. Make us able to receive new and greater gifts of Thy goodness and grace. We come to Thee this morning to renew before Thee our thanksgiving for every day, and yet never brought with sufficient fervour nor gratitude, for all the unspeakable mercies of Thy nature and of Thy Spirit. We thank Thee for daily benefits, for gifts that have flowed to us in unbroken and ever-increasing measure. We thank Thee that day by day we are bound to Thee by a heavier chain of obligation and of gratitude for mercies bestowed. We thank Thee for all that long-suffering and wondrous love of Thine which doth not reckon, before it continues to send our benefits, whether we rightly use them or not. Thou art the giving God, that givest to all men liberally and upbraidest not, though there is so much which Thou mightest rebuke and correct by the manner of Thy providential dealings, in the manner of our reception and use of Thy blessings; but we thank Thee this morning for the continued good which we receive at Thine hand, and for all the daily gifts which gladden our lives and anticipate our wants; and we pray for grace ever to commit to Thee, and to Thy wise providence, all outward things with true submission and surrender of pride.

May we ever say, "The Lord shall choose our inheritance for us;" and do Thou help us to enter into the meaning of Thy providences, and truly to read the lessons which Thou dost write for us in Thy daily dealings with us. May we understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. May we all of us be the men of Thy counsel, to whom Thou dost impart the secret of the Lord and the meaning of Thy ways.

We thank Thee, O Father, that we can come to Thee from divers circumstances and homes, and all unite in the one acknowledgment of glory and honour unto Him who

hath so wondrously loved us that He died for us, and so we have triumphed over death in this day. We bless Thee for a risen Saviour, for the triumph and the peace that come into our hearts when we can partake of the power of His resurrection. And we beseech Thee that all the outward exercises of worship in which we engage may, by Thy good Spirit, be made blessed, so that we may feel that God in very deed is nearer to us than on ordinary days; and may we, in our worship, find Thy loving presence teaching us how to pray. We beseech Thee to draw us nearer to Thee in the deep sense of our own infirmity and weakness; and do Thou put to shame the poverty of our petitions and the feebleness of our faith by the greatness of Thine answers and the wondrous largeness of Thy gifts to us. So help us this morning that every one of us in Thy presence, whatever may be the present condition of our lives, may find that there is in Thy worship the thing which we need; and may we each bear away in heart and mind the specific blessing which will do us most good in the tasks which Thy Providence lays upon us. We desire to come to Thee now, with humble dependence upon Thee, and Thee only, as the Source of all blessing and the Author of all grace; and while we thank Thee for all past loving-kindness and tender care, we pray that Thou wouldst still be with us, and help and bless us today.

We commit ourselves to Thy care with all our remembrances of the past, which in some measure assure us of peaceful trust in Thee for the future; and we pray Thee to hear us and accept us now for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

β.

LXX.

O LORD, our gracious Father, we thank Thee for that word which we have been reading, that Thou dost bless us

with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and we beseech Thee that we, here this morning, may not only be united one to another in these outward exercises of worship and relations of Church fellowship, but may each for himself be united to Jesus Christ; that in Him we may have all those blessings which we have been reading are granted to them that abide in Him. In Him may we obtain the inheritance; in Him may we obtain redemption, through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; in Him may we have all gifts of grace and strength according to our need.

Thou hast given Him to be Head over all things; and we thank Thee that Thy supremacy over all creatures is held by our Brother, for His brethren and companions. We bless Thee that we may receive supplies from Him, and we pray that out of His fulness we may all receive wisdom, and grace, and strength, and righteousness, and peace and patience, and consolation, light in darkness, victory in struggle, joy in sorrow, life in death, and Divine glory at last.

What have we of ourselves? What have we beyond? In Thee all fulness dwells, and all Thy fulness is in Christ, the River and Channel of Thy love to the world. Grant us then, we pray Thee, that we may not hunger and die of want by the side of such fulness, nor perish of thirst by the side of so deep a Fountain; but may we all, by humble faith and patient waiting, and union of fellowship in heart and mind with Jesus Christ, be refreshed from His fulness and fed with light from that central Sun. O Lord, look down upon us this morning, we pray Thee; give us, as we wait here before Thee, the needful help for the understanding of Thy holy Word, and for the taking into heart and conscience of all the lessons it would teach us. We pray that Thou wouldst bestow upon us the message of Thy love in that great Gospel; we thank Thee for the written records of that message which abide with us from genera-

tion to generation, and have been the source of such untold blessings for every age of Thy Church, and we pray that we, in these new times, may learn from Thy Word all Thou dost desire we should learn. Enlighten, this morning, all who shall speak in Thy name; let them speak words that are in accordance with Thy holy will, and may they give much blessing to them that hear them.

And bless all our brethren who have been, are, or shall be, engaged this day, as the day rolls round this great world. We thank Thee for the communion of saints by whom the earth is girdled to-day with prayer and praise as the hours float round it; and we beseech Thee that all our brethren of every name and every Church—may Thy Spirit be with them to-day, and may they receive the same communication cleansing and gladdening with holy blessings.

Comfort, we pray Thee, the pained and the sorrowful, Thy friends and brethren. O Thou Christ! Thou didst suffer Thyself, comfort them, Thou Lord of all patience, with Thine own presence, and bring Thy peace even as Thou didst on earth; pass again into the hearts of Thy servants, and be present, O Lord, in all sick chambers, and give them light and healing.

And may they whose path is wrapped in darkness, and with whom the outward man is perishing, receive that light and healing.

We commend to Thee our Sovereign and our country. We pray that righteousness, and peace, and sobriety, and holiness, and desires after godliness may abound among us; and we ask that Thy kingdom may be spread throughout the earth, and that very swiftly, not only in Thy gracious purposes but in the literal facts of the world's history, there may be one Lord Christ, who shall reign over all the earth.

Hear us now and give us Thy gracious help as we wor-

ship in Thy presence to-day, and mercifully receive us now through Christ our Saviour.

β.

LXXI.

O LORD, our Almighty Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; may we, here before Thee, increase in the knowledge of God, and be strengthened with all might according to the power of Thy glory.

In all things may we give thanks unto the Father; in all things may we increasingly learn to know and do and love His holy will; and so may we be built up in everything that is pure and good, and delivered from all that is wrong and low.

We thank Thee, Lord, for all that abundant count of blessing for which we ought to praise Thee; and most of all that Thou dost make, even of such poor sinful creatures as we are, those that are fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Make us, we pray Thee, so fit; and grant unto all of us, that by the power of Thy good Spirit dwelling in us, we may be delivered from the dominion of the darkness, from serving sin and self, from being the slaves of the world and time and sense, from being the servants of the present state, and from the fleeting shadows that are round about us here; may we be delivered from all other dominion but Thine own supreme will; and mercifully translated, even while we live here upon earth, into the kingdom of Thy dear Son. Oh! bow our hearts, we pray Thee, unto cheerful submission to that reign of love and rule of gentleness; and grant us the possession of the righteousness and peace and joy wherein His kingdom standeth in the hearts and lives of men. And we pray, O Lord, that Thou wouldst mercifully look down upon us as we have gathered ourselves once more together here, and desire earnestly to seek Thy face; and whatsoever our need before

Thee now, Thou knowest all our various conditions, the unspoken desires, for many of us, the unconscious necessities, and the hard, terrible sickness and sorrows of our hearts. We pray, O Lord, that Thou wouldst give to us, in this time of worship, the spiritual gifts we most need. If any of us are here to-day in any perplexity of mind, do Thou help us, do Thou reveal to us light upon Thy Word wheresoever it is dark, and help us to understand, and to know, and to accept, the truth as it is in Jesus.

If any of us are here this morning with any secret pain upon our spirits, for ourselves or for those that are dear to us, we should bring such to Thee and pray that Thou wouldst lighten the load and calm the anxiety; and that Thou wouldst graciously, in every affair as it may come to us and our loved ones, grant a happy issue out of any trouble.

If there are any of us here to-day saddened by the sickness of those that are dear to us, sustain and comfort, we beseech Thee, and do Thou send help and cure, and do Thou send patience and trust. Look down upon all that are in any sorrow. We commend to Thee those that are absent from our midst to-day, and we beseech Thee to be with them wheresoever they may be; may those of them who are seeking health and repose be conscious of Thy presence, and of the sense of duty going with them even in their times of leisure. And may all who are detained from Thy house this day have Thee in their hearts, and the quiet of the true sanctuary filling their souls.

We pray that Thou wouldst bless all congregations of Christian people. The Lord be with them all, and enlighten, and warm, and convince, and cleanse.

We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst pour out Thy Spirit more abundantly upon all professing Christians in this day, and help them to live holier lives, of more manifest devotion and of a higher strain of godliness. Deliver them from

their worldliness, their covetousness, their low lives, their conformity with the maxims and conduct of those around them. May all who profess to be Thy people become truly "separate from the world" and be the power of goodness, bearing witness to Jesus Christ; and let Thy Spirit be with all who open their lips in Thy name to-day, and give us, in our weakness, a share of Thy rich blessing. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon this gathered congregation, and help them to hear and us to speak as those ought to do who, for every word spoken and every word heard, shall have to give an account.

We beseech Thee to bless our Sovereign and our country, and all rulers and potentates, and men of authority and influence, in this and other realms; and we pray that all such may use their influence for the highest and noblest purpose, for the furtherance of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His merciful and hallowing reign in the world.

Now we desire to commend ourselves to Thy gracious care and keeping, forgive all our imperfections and manifold sins, and grant to us all Thy rich blessing, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

β.

LXXII.

O LORD, our Heavenly Father, we pray Thee help us to come before Thee this night with hearts undistracted, and undividedly fixed upon our service to Thee. May all doubts and fears and perplexities, whether arising from dark things of our own personal history, or from great questions which we cannot solve, be taken from our hearts and minds, and may nothing come between us and the sunshine of Thy face, and the firm grasp upon the truth that God loveth us. Help us, we pray, to conquer by Thy mighty power all the fear and all the want of trust that is so prevalent in us. Dig out of our hearts all the dread that comes from

selfishnesses that speak only too truly of our unworthiness. Take away from our feebleness all the fear that arises when we look forward and remember how little we know of that great darkness into which we shall one day have to pass. When Thy providences seem dark and strange, help us to hold by the happy faith that all things are full of blessings to them that love Thee, if we know that we are dwelling in God and God in us. And may we be far from danger as from fear, from temptation as from yielding. May there be no sweetness able to draw us from Thee. May there be nothing and nobody that has such power over us as Thine own self. May all the things of this life fail and cease to influence us, and may none, or all of them together, tempt us to cast away our confidence and forfeit the great recompense of reward. Have pity on our feebleness, strengthen our desires after Thee; may we seek first Thy kingdom even because we possess Thy kingdom. May our desires ever be such as bring with them a prophecy and a pledge, and, in some measure a reality of their own fulfilment. Forgive all our many sins. We do not like to know, we cannot fathom, as Thou canst, the low depths of our evils; nor do we rightly see any part of it; we must be pure and perfect before we can see how all sin is apparent to Thyself. Yet help us in some measure to understand our weakness, and cleanse us from our secret faults. Help us to guard with all carefulness our hearts and to set a watch on the door of our lips. We see that our own poor guarding will be of little avail. Be Thou ever near us. Let us have the felt joy of Thy felt forgiveness, the quiet assurance that Thou art pacified for all that we have done; and in the strength of that blessed confidence may go on our way rejoicing.

We pray for Thy pardoning grace, for Thy quickening and healing grace. We beseech Thee that the power of Thy good Spirit may abide in us and in our spirits. Refine them and sanctify them, driving from us all evil. May we

possess wisdom and righteousness and strength, and all that goes to make up that complete redemption which was in Jesus Christ, and may we make it more sure every day that we live. For those of us who profess to have some portion of Thy love and an answering love for it, strengthen our faith, hope, and charity. Help us, in looking back, to make the days that still remain to us more full of holy, religious, and glad hope, and of a patient strength greater than in the past. We thank Thee that we have not a Shepherd that drives, but One that goes before, and we will follow Him whithersoever He goeth. And because we follow Christ, may we not walk in darkness, but in Thy glorious light. Give us some words to speak which may comfort us all as a blessed message from Thyself. We thank Thee for an open Scripture, for our gathering together. We bless Thee that the scattered feebleness may be gathered into strength and that the dying embers may burst into a flame. We beseech Thee that we may find Christ in our midst. Bless our work; pour out Thy Spirit upon us as a congregation. Revive Thy work amongst us. Let the Name of Jesus Christ be magnified and many hearts rejoice in the possession of Thy salvation. Bless all here before Thee, especially such as are known to us of our number who may be in sorrow, sickness, anxiety, pain, care, or trouble of any kind. Do Thou help them according to their several necessities, and be very gracious and gentle in Thy visitation upon them. Forgive all our sins, and send to us Thy grace through our great Intercessor, who bears all our iniquities and sins. Hear us and accept us for Christ our Lord's sake. Amen.

β.

LXXIII.

O LORD, our almighty and gracious Father, help us, we beseech Thee, now to fix believing and loving thoughts upon Thee, for the greatness and the beauty and the

gracious tenderness of Thy wonderful character. Lowly as we lie before Thee, Thy exalted Name rises up above us, a rock and a refuge. We thank Thee that we can think of Thee as so fair, so good, so wondrous in Thy gentleness, so tender in the touch of Thy hand, so long-suffering with the patience of Thy heart. We thank Thee for this full storehouse of blessed help and good, which Thou art ready to pour in all its abundance into our empty hand. And we would come to Thee and ask, not for the outward things of this perishable life, but rather that our desires may be lifted up above them, and that we may seek, first, the kingdom, and the righteousness, and the wisdom, and the likeness of our God. Help all of us here before Thee, and especially the younger portion of us, to set Thee before us as the supreme object of our love and of our seeking. May our lives be rooted in Thyself. May Thy smile be our highest possession, and may we all feel, and be faithful to the conviction that Thou art the heritage of our spirits, and that without Thee we must be poor indeed.

O Lord, we acknowledge that the sweetness of Thy creatures and the works of Thy hands too often draw away our affections, our hopes, and our thoughts from Thee, but we pray that we may in time to come live more wisely, more soberly, more righteously, and that we may all be more godly. Incline our hearts to Thy love, and, whatever else we may find in our lives, or miss, may we possess the enduring riches, of which nothing can rob us, of Thine own friendship, fellowship, and likeness. Forgive us, O Lord, the manifold transgressions and evils of our past; and do Thou help us, penitently, yet confidently, to come to Thee now, bearing with us all the burden of our infirmities and sin, and to spread them all out before Thee, with whom there is abundance of forgiveness and plenteous redemption. And, O Lord, help all of us to count that the time past of our lives may suffice to have wrought the will of the flesh,

and the time that remains to work the will of God, and not the will of man. The gracious tenderness of Thine infinite love compasses us all round about, and may we each of us in our several places of life, in the tasks, in the sorrows, and in the joys which Thou dost send, seek to glorify Thee.

Thanks be to Thy Name for all Thy great and wonderful goodness in the times that are gone by; and we bless Thee for the care and mercies, far beyond the measure of our desert, far beyond the sweep of our hopes and desires—for blessings that have come to us in a questionable shape. We thank Thee in so far as we have been able to understand the gracious meaning of Thy discipline, and we beseech Thee, that upon the dark places of our lives the light of Thy love may arise, and we may walk in peaceable submission, knowing that Thy will is good, and believing that where we see it not now we shall see it hereafter. Let Thy good Spirit be with us, and Thy love comfort us all round about, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

B.

LXXIV.

O LORD, our Almighty God, our Helper and our Friend, strengthen Thou us, we beseech Thee, that we may choose the better part which shall not be taken from us, and flee from all the lusts that war against the soul, and follow after the graces and beauties with which Thou dost allure men's nature. We thank Thee that in the midst of the conflicts and difficulties of our daily life we may all betake ourselves to Thy great strength, and clothe ourselves with the armour of God.

And we beseech Thee that we here before Thee,—those of us that are beginning life, and those of us that are further on in the road,—may alike yield ourselves to true and faithful consecration, to be Thy servants and soldiers until our lives' ends. Preserve the young from the snares of

youth, from the dominion of passion and the flesh and the world. May they in early days choose Thee for their Guide and their Friend and the Helper of their youth, and so be kept upright and innocent of much transgression. May they be wise concerning that which is good, and simple concerning evil. Do Thou help the young men before Thee to keep themselves unspotted before the world, to guard the gates by which evil enters into the life, and to guard their hearts, from which are the issues of life. In slippery places may they take Thee to hold them up. May they cleanse their ways by taking heed thereto, and pondering the path of their feet according to Thy word; and if any of them before Thee in this great city have begun to decline from the covenant of their youth and the God of their youth, we beseech Thee to bring such back to Thyself; and give all Thy mercy and power to our poor words this evening, to teach many consciences and spirits here, and to commend Christ to all holy and pure living to many a young man and woman in Thy presence this evening. We beseech Thee to guide our thoughts; direct our utterances; let Thine own power be manifest in us now. May this year of worship be this day well begun; and do Thou give signs of Thy presence and seals to our ministry, even souls for our hire. Bless all of us as we may severally want, guide our thoughts, help us to accept Thy Word, to take Christ for our Saviour. Do Thou help us day by day in the recurring duties, in all the various changeable circumstances of this world. May we see something of the meaning of the mystery, of the greatness, of the grandeur, of the glory and wonder of life, even in its smallest and most commonplace events and circumstances; and to us may all things be great and all-important because we link them all with the Will from which they come, and with the Heaven to which they may bring us. May Thy strength be ours, in all times of weakness,

and difficulty, and toil, and sorrow. We beseech Thee that the communion and the comfort of Thy presence may ever make light in us and in our hearts, even in the days of darkness and winter. And may our lives be all ordered by Thy Word and fructified by Thy blessing, and illuminated by Thy light and Thy Spirit. May we possess in Thee a peaceful spirit of fear and joyful faith, and so may we emerge into the better light of the perfect day. Forgive all our many sins, and grant us, we pray Thee, Thy gracious help this evening, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

β.

LXXV.

O LORD our Almighty Father, our all-sufficient Helper, our ever-faithful Friend, we come to Thee again with all our weaknesses and all our wants, and would plead with Thee—taught that we need to plead, that Thou wouldst be merciful to us and visit us with the sweetness of Thy grace and the sufficiency of Thy gift. Regard us here before Thee now, O Lord, we pray Thee, and let Thy tender love, in which we have so much reason to trust, be again manifested to the thoughts of each of us. Surely it is revealed at every step. May it not be revealed in vain for any of us, but may we all see in that which befalls us from Thy hand the revelation of Thine own Infinite heart of tender and perfect goodness. We bless Thee, O Lord, for all the past of Thy kindness towards us. We thank Thee that in all our experience hitherto, day unto day hath uttered speech, and night unto night hath shown knowledge of Thy care and of Thy kindness; and now we pray Thee, that, as the time stretches dim and uncertain before us—be it longer or shorter—that same animating, and long-experienced goodness, may fill it full of brightness, and may we find Thine all-sufficing presence to the end. We lift up lowly hearts to Thee this evening, for indeed we need to

make appeal to Thy tender goodness, since we have so often gone contrary to Thy will, and set at nought Thy pleading; and cherished vices and evil in our own hearts which have been foolish and sinful. Thy law with its great things has too often been to us a strange thing, and we have too often followed the suggestions of our own hearts, and have taken counsel of our own inclinations rather than of Thee. So we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst pardon all the defects of conduct, and the far deeper defects of our character and nature. Do Thou, O Lord, teach us how feeble our best resolutions are; help us to distrust ourselves, even when we are strongest and wisest, and to lean our whole confidence for all goodness and peace upon Thyself alone. And teach us, we pray Thee, so much as it is good for us to know, all the evil of our own hearts; and guard us against the temptations that so constantly and so subtilly beset us. We appeal to Thee for Thy forgiving mercy, and we pray that the happy confidence in Thy fatherly love and pardoning goodness may always abide with us, as the helper of every good thing in ourselves. May we feel ourselves Thy servants, because Thou hast loosened our bonds. May we render to Thee, with glad hearts, the lives that Thou hast redeemed, and yield up to Thee the souls for which Christ hath died. Strengthen, we pray Thee, any little germ of good that may be in us, and bring it to perfection; bless Thou the springing thereof, and may it bear fruit unto life everlasting. Enlarge and enlighten our thoughts to a more worthy apprehension of the great sweep of Thy will and the glory of Thy love; and help us, we pray Thee, to bring all our lives in all their actions, in their slightest and most spontaneous deeds, under the guidance of Thine own will, and under the bonds of Thy law, the bonds of freedom, which are light and life. Help us to accept and recognise all the various phases in which Thou dost speak unto us; may we

be the children of Wisdom, who know her voice. We confess before Thee our many blindnesses, our misconceptions of Thy purposes, our misreadings of Thy will, our narrow thoughts of Thy great love. Do Thou look down upon us with love and mercy and forgiveness. Visit us, as we are gathered together, with Thy merciful help, and strengthen us that we may call upon Thy Name, and not only call upon Thee but be aware that Thou dost answer us when we call upon Thee. We beseech Thee to hear us, and in Thy love and goodness make Thy hearing of us plain and manifest to all our hearts now, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

β.

LXXVI.

O God, we thank Thee that in all things Jesus Christ is made like unto a brother, and that He became our High Priest to enter into the fellowship of our sufferings and the sympathy of our woes. And whatsoever burdens we carry, whether of duty or of pain, may we find a strength to bear them, faith to rejoice in them, and strength to be victorious over them in that great Lord who has conquered for us by endurance, and whose cross is His throne. May we too die unto self, and in Him unto sin. May we too learn the meaning and the mercy of sorrow and of pain. May we too possess the brotherly High Priest for our Friend and Helper; and in us may the likeness of Thy Son and the image of sons be perfected. Strengthen us, we pray Thee, in all the variety of our changing circumstances here. Nothing continueth in one state; but we bless Thee that Thou art the same. Our days flee away, but we bless Thee that Thy years have no end. And we would lift up our thoughts to Thee, and above all that is mortal and perishing, and bless Thee that we can anchor ourselves in Thy love, and bind ourselves to Thy changeless throne. May we all be par-

takers of that immortal and blessed life which is in Thee. And may we lift up above the conquering years our solemn trust in the changeless God. May peace, and strength, and patience, and righteousness pour into our hearts as we look not at the things that are seen and temporal, but at the things which are eternal, and to Him who is the King of the ages. O Lord, let all passing things bring us to Thee, and from out of life as it passeth—when it has passed—may we get the enduring treasure of a character moulded after Christ, and an inheritance in God. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst give us this morning the life which we so much need, and which Thou dost so gladly bestow. Strengthen us to think of Thee aright, and to speak of Thee so as not to darken the brightness of Thy path. May the message which Thou dost put into our lips pass through the heart of the speaker ere it comes to the ears of the hearers; and may Thy truth dwell in all our souls, and Thy great Gospel, with its mighty treasure of wisdom and mercy, become more real, and more dear, and more wonderful, and more certain to all of us by our worship to-day. We thank Thee that we can come to Thee with all our imperfections and sin, and believe that Thou hearest even us too through Jesus Christ. May true devotion stir in all our hearts to-day, and if any of us have come into Thy house with any troubled thought, with any anxious foreboding, with any painful memories, we pray that these may only serve to make us more eager to receive from Thyself a blessing, and then may they fade away from our minds without disturbing our worship. Guide us in all the paths that Thy providence leads us into, and may none of us fall victims to the temptations which lie round about. May the young learn to give their hearts to Thee in early days, and so be kept innocent of much transgression. And those of us who are farther on on the road, may we cast not away our great confidence in Thy great recom-

pense of reward. And those of us for whom the warfare is nearly accomplished, and the shadow of life is lengthening, may we find that in the truths of earlier days there are unexhausted deeps still, and strength when strength decays. Help us all to love and we shall be blest, to wait upon Thee and we shall be at rest. Bless all Christian people gathered this day seeking Thy face. Let the name of Christ be magnified, and the power of His work be made more conspicuous in all the assemblies of Christ-loving men to-day, in whatever place they may be gathered, in whatever tongue they may worship. And grant that to those who may be absent from the communion of saints, like blessings may be granted; and the little sanctuary and the solitary couch be sweet and precious as the gathered blessings of the great congregations. We pray for our Sovereign and for our country, and not for this land alone, but for all in authority, and for all the nations of the earth, that the Kingdom of Christ may be furthered and His glory established among all the peoples and tongues of the world.

Accept our thanks, our supplications, and hear us through Christ our Redeemer and Lord. Amen.

β.

LXXVII.

O LORD our God, the hope of all the earth, in whom alone is peace and victory; to depart from Thee is shame, to dwell with Thee is peace, may we inherit the blessing of the men that make the Lord their trust, and whose hope the Lord is. Strengthen Thou us, we beseech Thee, even now, to lay hold with happy hearts on Thine own great Name, and may we feel how sweet and strength-giving it is to wait upon the Lord. We have indeed earned for ourselves the sadness and the sorrow of those that make flesh their arm, and we have found that it is barrenness and weari-

ness to rest upon ourselves; and yet our feeble hearts are ever starting away from Thee as a deceitful bough; and we have made some experience of how difficult it is to know the weakness and wilfulness of our own foolish nature, so we cry to Thee, O Lord, for Thy great strength, and beseech Thee that we may be anointed with the oil of Thy good Spirit, that all our nature may open for the reception of Thine own blessed Self, and that in our hearts, unworthy that they are, Thou mayest dwell in the completeness of Thy love, and in the power of Thy quickening grace. Cleanse us, and we shall be clean. Save us, and we shall be saved. Let us possess the fulness of Thine own love. And give us, we pray Thee, as we come to Thee now, quiet confidence in Thyself, our best and truest Friend. We thank Thee, O Lord, that though we have to draw near to Thee with many acknowledgments of much weakness and many a sin, yet Thy great goodness is unclouded, and Thine unchanging mercies have not turned from us. We bless Thee that we can be so confident when our confidence is in Thee. How little we know of the depths of Thy heart. How poorly we can see the greatness of Thy Name; how dark the reflection even of Thy brightest light in our thoughts; but our comfort and strength is, that Thy ways are not as our ways, nor Thy thoughts as our thoughts; nor is anything that we imagine of Thee, the measure of the greatness of Thy love and goodness to us. Deliver us then, we pray Thee, from all unworthy imaginings of Thyself, and lift us up nearer to the realities that are beyond the fulness of our understanding, the realities of Thine own loving heart, and the strength and sufficiency of Thy benediction. Help us, not only when we gather ourselves together thus, but through all the weariness and the work and care of our common days, to feel that Thou art ever with us. And may that thought blend peaceably and purifyingly with all our occupations; may it make our daily

business something nobler and better than only the means of providing the bread that perisheth; may it infuse double sweetness into our joys; may it make us bear with thankful hearts, as chastened children, the disappointments and the rebuffs that we daily experience. We thank Thee, O Lord, that, however little we may understand of Thee, our thoughts of Thee are not the measure of Thy gift to us. Thou art able to do for us exceedingly above all that we ask of Thee. Do Thou put to shame the narrowness of our petitions and the lowness of our wishes by the greatness of Thy gifts and the fulness of Thy mercies. Forgive us all our imperfection and sin. We look back upon our past, and feel that we dare not offer it upon Thine altar, were it not that we can think of One, the Great High Priest, in whom we are accepted, and by whom all our iniquity is purged. Help us then, we pray Thee, coming to Thy throne this morning with thankful hearts, to bring with us the penitent remembrance of all our past sin and short-coming; and casting down all the burden before those pure eyes, may that burden melt away as Thou dost regard it with the pitying gaze. We thank Thee that in Thee we have a Friend who is nearer to us than the enemy of our souls, and may all of us in Thy presence to-day take refuge in that sanctuary—the throne of the King, the dwelling-place of glory, the lofty stay above all dangers and evils, the home from the beginning of all creatures. O Lord, look down upon us now, we pray Thee, and give us in Thy great mercy Thy help and blessing, as we are gathered here this morning; strengthen us for all our worship; help us to lay a loving hold upon Thine own great love; and whatever we do in word or in deed, may we do in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

β.

LXXVIII.

O LORD, truly Thou art God, and we would come to Thee. Thou hast called us with every gracious invitation in Thy Word; Thou hast drawn us by the cords of love and of mercy; Thou hast inclined us by the influences of Thy good Spirit; Thou hast taught us, by the sorrows of life, how bitter a thing it is to shut ourselves out from Thee; and we have, in some measure, learned that in vain is it to hope for salvation from the hills and from the multitude of the mountains; that in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. And so we would lift up our hearts to Thee now, blessing Thee for those gracious words with which Thou hast, unto all ages, made certain Thy loving and welcoming reception of returning wanderers. We come unto Thee, and beseech Thee that Thou wouldest deliver us from the shame that covers us, from the evil that swallows the wicked, from all the suicide of sin, and the misery of departure from Thyself. We pray Thee that Thou wouldst help us to fix and set our souls' desires upon Thee alone. We pray that Thy Holy Spirit, the Comforter, may work upon all our hearts here, teaching us wherein we have erred against Thee, and revealing to us the knowledge of our sins, the knowledge of Thy forgiving love and pardoning mercy. No doubt, O Lord, we have to take to ourselves the name of backsliding children. O Lord, we have wandered away from Thee by many a despondent and rebellious will and thought and purpose. We have forgotten Thee far more often than we have remembered Thee. In the midst of the work of life and the duties of the day, we have cherished hopes and purposes and desires on which we have not sought Thy blessing. We have not, as we might and should have done, set Thee always before us. Our lives have escaped from the control of the faith of the Son of God that lived for us and

gave Himself for us; and we have sought to please ourselves, to follow the devices and desires of our own hearts, to elevate our own thoughts into the place of Thy truth, our own wishes into the place of Thy commandments, and our own desires into the place of Thy providence. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst forgive us all our selfishness and sin, and whatsoever faults of character, and doubtless of evil, may have followed from that bitter root of separation of ourselves from Thee, we pray Thee to pardon this, and grant that in what remains of our portion of life, we may glorify Thee with all our hearts, and yield our whole selves to Thee in quiet confidence, in happy confidence, and in strenuous earnestness and resolved consecration. And may our days be made fair and peaceful by Thy presence, and our characters refined and hallowed and beautified by the influence of Thy grace; and may the likeness of Jesus Christ be stamped increasingly upon our hearts, softened to receive it by the warmth of Thine own love, and may we behold the glory of the Lord reflected on ourselves, and be changed by it into His own likeness. We thank Thee that in all our infirmities and shortcomings we can be so sure of Thine unaltered constant love, so we betake ourselves to Thee, the Refuge of the world and the Friend of every man, and pray that Thy help may be our strength, Thy peace in our hearts, Thy righteousness shed abroad in our characters, and Thy glory furthered by our life and by our death. And now we commit ourselves to Thee, with thankful recognition of Thy great and wonderful love to us; and since Thou hast done such great things for us, whereof we should be glad, may we have every possible trust in Thee for all that dim future, and be able to cast our whole burden and care upon Thee, not seeking to know what may be beyond, nor to penetrate the merciful will Thou dost hide,—the things of the future,—from our eyes; but rest in the sure con-

fidence that, whithersoever we go, God will go with us, and that from everlasting to everlasting Thou art our Home and our All. Take us, then, into Thy care; and may we find it safe and sweet to dwell beneath the shadow of Thy wings, nor ever seek to so remove.

All we ask is for the sake of Christ our Lord. Amen.

β.

LXXIX.

O LORD our Father, who needest not that Thy children should come to Thee with many words, either to tell Thee our wants or to move Thee to supply them, we thank Thee that before we called Thee Thou didst answer. And since Thou canst interpret the young ravens' cry, Thou dost discern still more the unspoken desires and needs of them that trust in Thee. But we bless Thee that for our confidence and courage Thou dost let us speak to Thee of our wants, that we may be sure of the supply of every one that we think of when we turn it into a prayer. And, therefore we would spread out here our words in a confession of sin that is a cry for righteousness; in the acknowledgment of much unworthiness, which is a plea for Thee to accept and forgive, and we pray that all the need which we know we have we may believe and know to be satisfied from Thyself. What is there that we do not require? What is there for which we do not depend upon Thyself? and, blessed be Thy Name, what is there that we need which Thou art not infinitely willing—yea even waiting, willing and longing to give us. Help us to raise our hearts and to take the cup of salvation and of mercy which Thou from of old hast been holding out to every one of us, and, notwithstanding all our great unworthiness and our refusals, dost still continue to press upon our acceptance. We thank Thee that we have everything in Thee, and as much in Thee as ever we desire,

and beseech Thee that Thou wouldst help us to open our mouths wide that Thou mayest fill them, and to cherish a large and lofty faith in the completeness and stableness of Thy gifts; so may we go about through life less troubled than we often are either about the things that pertain to ourselves or those dear to us. May we be set free from many a care, and brought into the liberty of the children of God, and know that in the Father's house there is bread enough and to spare, so the children cannot perish with hunger. Give us all here before Thee to count Thy love and Thy sympathy and Thy law as more than necessary food.

We beseech Thee that when we try to speak a word in Thy Name it may be in entire forgetfulness of self, and with a separation from all unworthy and low motives. May Thy Name be magnified and Thy great message of peace to the world be rightly set forth before us this evening; and help us to accept the offers of Thy goodness and love, and so may we go out of this place this evening strengthened for all Thy will concerning us, and brought to know Jesus Christ and Thy revelation in Him as our chiefest treasure and our highest joy. Bless us in all the varieties of work, of character, and of circumstance. Supply our necessities. Give us all Thy providence. Make us wise to know what we ought to do day by day and every moment of our lives. Keep our hearts unchangingly set on the changeless God. We beseech Thee to hear us and pour out Thy blessing upon us now. Forgive all our sin. Answer all the petitions offered this day in public and private that come from so many hearts, seeing that all are gathered up into the mighty intercession of Christ, in whom we trust and through whom we come. Amen.

β.

LXXX.

O LORD, our merciful Father, who art always and ever ready to help poor creatures when they cry to Thee, knowing their poverty and their need, we would lift up our desires to Thee now, believing that it is not in vain for us to speak to Thee; and we ask Thee for Thy gracious presence to be granted to us now, and feel that Thou art near, and rejoice in the thought. Though Thou art high and beyond us, yet Thou art nearer than we can think. In Thee we live and move and have our being. Thy will moves everywhere, and Thy hand everywhere encompasses Thy creatures, and all things live because Thou willest that they should. With Thee is the fountain of life. We thank Thee that in all our weakness we have such ready and swift access to Thy presence, that with one thought we can take ourselves to Thee at any moment. Thou dost not bid us to stand far off, but dost draw us to Thyself by the loving incentives of Thy Grace and Spirit. May we feel that God is working in all our hearts and consciences now. Gladden us with some great happy thought, true and clear as it is happy, of Jesus and His gracious love. We thank Thee for all the brightness that clusters around Thy Name; for all the good things of God which have been borne to our ears. We thank Thee that we can put away every doubt and every question, that we can feel that in Thee there is no darkness, but light for evermore. There are many things in this life that seem to us very dark indeed; but we believe that Thou wilt be with us, so we pray that the light of Thy presence may be always shining down upon us. O Lord! we pray for a deeper acquaintance with Thee, for a completer knowledge and a firmer faith in Thee. May Thy Name be to us no mere name. May we have tasted and seen that God is good. To us may the blessedness of trusting in Thee be

no matter of hearsay, but of customary experience; and may every day add strength to our conviction that it is good for us to wait upon the Lord. Forgive all the wandering desires and thoughts of which we feel that we have been guilty. Forgive us all this; and if we have to-day forgotten Thee, or set our hand to the duties of our calling from other motives than the highest, or permitted worldly thoughts to come out and trouble us, or to draw a veil over our eyes and hide Thee from us, forgive all that, and all the evil which comes from it. Forgive the too great fear that we should love the things that are seen, the false estimation in which we are too apt to hold them. Bring us back to wisdom and reason which is faith. Help us to walk always with Thee, and help us to be sure that Thou Thyself art our true treasure, and that we cannot be poor so long as Thou art with us, nor desolate so long as we trust in Thee. Give us Thine own counsel for our guidance, and let our hearts calmly and quietly rest upon Thy Providence, knowing that it is ever good, and that when we see the end as Thou dost, we shall think as Thou dost, concerning Thy will, that it is all perfect. We pray for patience, for wisdom, for power to do our work. Guide us by Thy counsel, sustain us by Thy hand, and make us increasingly calm in the assured possession of Thyself. And in regard to outer things, O Lord, give to us such blessings as Thou knowest to be best for us; help us to accept the dispensations of Thy Providence, and take our stand upon the blessed conviction that Thou dost maintain our lives. We pray that Thou wouldst remember any amongst us, or belonging to our communion, who may be in any kind of sorrow. Especially comfort all mourning hearts; speak tender and gracious words to solitary souls, draw near to those who may need Thy consoling presence. Comfort those who are in weakness and pain, all those who are stretched in sick beds; put beneath them Thy everlasting arms, that if the

outward man be decaying, the inward man may be renewed day by day. Whensoever we gather ourselves together, as now, may Thy presence be felt upon us. Pour out Thy Good Spirit upon the ordinances of Thy house. May we be honoured and blest in Thy hand in spreading the Name of Jesus Christ in many hearts that have not welcomed His message, and in leading many of our brethren to put their trust in the Lord our God. In all exercises and works of a Christian community let Thy grace be ever felt by us. We commit ourselves to Thy loving care. Keep us through faith unto salvation, and guard us from all the evil of our wicked and treacherous hearts, and after bring us to Thine everlasting kingdom and glory for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

B.

LXXXI.

O LORD, our Heavenly Father, we are deeply conscious of our unworthiness to approach Thee, but we are glad also thankfully to feel that however evil and sinful we feel ourselves to be, we can yet venture near to Him who is as a consuming fire, in gladness and peace. Not in our own strength, nor thinking we can bear the light of Thy countenance would we seek to approach Thee. We thank Thee that we can cast all our care upon Him that is our great High Priest; and in the gladness of that welcome assurance we now draw near unto Thee, and open our hearts to Thee, and wait upon Thee until Thou shalt send to all and each of us a blessing. We thank Thee for all the ready way that Thou hast with us. We bless Thee that whilst we know all Thy past revelations and power and judgment, we know Thee, too, as tender and gracious, gentle, long-suffering, full of pity and patience. We lift up our hearts to Thee and pray that we may now find our home in Thee, and may always be glad when we think of Thee. May it

be always a refreshment and joy to think of Thee. May we always give thanks at the remembrance of Thy holiness. And since Thou hast been pleased to manifest Thyself most perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray Thee that we may look upon Him as seeing in Him the Father And we ask Thee that as our days pass away Thou wouldst help us to draw closer to Thyself, and as we make experience of how nothing can satisfy, and all duties and possessions and circumstances and days and months and years glide away into that great abyss beneath us, may our hearts be set upon the unchanging love of the eternal Father, and may we be getting more and more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Look upon us and grant to us of the knowledge and possession of Thy forgiveness. We need it at every moment, for we are always falling beneath our own consciences, how much more then beneath Thine own pure and steadfast law. We thank Thee that notwithstanding our many sins we can still come to Thee with glad confidence, and we pray Thee that our evil may be taken away, and we be delivered from all the various subtle forms in which this world lays hold upon us. Keep us, we pray Thee, in that temper of standing waiting upon Thyself which shall lift us up above weakness and temptation, and give us wisdom to see the things which are here below in their true importance, their true insignificance. May we measure all by Thy standard. May we seek Thy kingdom first and see the all-sufficiency of Thy love and the emptiness of everything besides, and with our hearts more and more set loose from their anchorage and dependence upon all creatures. May Thy varying discipline not be in vain. If among us any need special consolation, who are bearing any kind of burden and care, may we see in it the loving hand of the Father, and find the consolation that is hidden therein. And we pray that all variety of our earthly condition, all the ups and downs of our lives,

the changes in our fortunes and prospects, and everything which Thou dost send to us, may accomplish the end to which Thou dost send it, and be made, by our faithful use of it, to minister to the purposes for which Thou hast ordained it. And may we become more like Thyself and share more fully in Thy holiness which Thou dost give to Thy children. Help us in our worship. Strengthen us to hear and speak and read in Thy Name, and let Thy great love live in our hearts and be music to our lips, and Thy truth be carried, even by our instrumentality, to all our minds and influence all our wills and make us all glad at heart. Strengthen us to speak and incline us to hear, and we beseech Thee that in all our meetings together, that great purpose which Thou hast appointed to be served by the assembling of Thy saints may indeed be fulfilled, Christ's Name be magnified, His kingdom made more transforming and more manifestly visible in our lives; and may many be drawn to be willing subjects to that King and law, and entrust their souls to that sure salvation. Bless us in all the variety of our work, and whatsoever we may set our hands to, give us wisdom in the undertaking, and patience, and pure and simple motives; and may we commit all to Thee and do all in Thy strength, and evoke Thy blessing upon all by our prayers and confidence in Thee. Be very near; keep and bless us, visit us with Thy salvation, and make us glad with Thy sweet presence, and take us all into Thy holy keeping, forgiving our evil and accepting our supplications for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

β.

LXXXII.

O LORD! our Almighty Refuge and ever-present Helper and Friend, hide Thou us, we beseech Thee, in the secret of Thy presence. May we ever feel that we are near Thee, and may that thought be a blessed and helpful and

strengthening one to us, lifting us up above many temptations and planting a hedge to shelter us from the glare of the delusive brightness of this world's sinful pleasure.

Give us, we pray Thee, a more firm and assured and happy hold of Thyself and of Thy love. Our thoughts cling to this low earth, but we would lift them to Thee. We beseech Thee that Thy great Cross may come near to each of us to raise our souls to the height of the holy thoughts that may be ours, and to make ours the glad assurance of Thy love. We thank Thee for that wonderful goodness which Thou hast wrought before the sons of men for those who trust in Thee. We beseech Thee that our imperfect confidence may be more than recompensed by the abundance of peace and truth which even through the narrow opening of our faith flows into our hearts. We thank Thee that Thou art always waiting and willing to bless us and do us good. Nothing which Thou hast and which Thou canst give dost Thou withhold from us. The whole fulness of Thine Infinite Being is at our disposal; and we thank Thee that we can lose the consciousness of our own infirmities in the triumphant remembrance of Thy mercy and Thy love. Be, we beseech Thee, a house of defence to save us, and our strong habitation whereunto we may continually resort. May we always feel that Thy everlasting arms are round about us, and in the thought of God, and His wisdom, and His love, and His will may we be devoutly drawn towards Him this day with all our minds and our spirits, in all their faculties and in all their powers. We would not wander away from Thee, O Lord, but in some measure we have learned how evil as well as how bitter a thing it is to forsake our God; but Thou knowest how apt to fail us, even at the most critical moments, are our own powers; and so we turn ourselves to Thee and pray that Thou wouldst satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Give us such experience of Thine own love and power, and make us to feel so gladsomely that Thou art good, that nothing may seem so precious to us as Thine own fellowship and friendship and favour. Forgive all the evils and short-comings of our path; pardon the busy anxieties and unbelieving cares which have so often troubled us and drawn us away from Thee, and weakened our strength for obedience and our joy in Thyself. And grant to us that while we are encompassed with the difficulties that belong to every human life, and have to fight the fight of faith here below, our spirits may know the rest that remaineth to the people of God; and that we, in the midst of cares, and of distractions, and of duties, and the busy occupations of life, may still have our fellowship in the heavens and our home there. But do Thou cleanse us from all the evil that works within us, and take out of our characters everything that is wrong; if we have been cherishing untrue thoughts about Thee and ourselves, we pray Thee that Thou wouldst enlighten our darkness; and whatsoever we may fail to apprehend of Thy Truth and of Thy purposes, oh, do Thou make more defined and plain to us. May we ever be waiting for the illumination of Thy good Spirit, and neither in our beliefs nor in our practice count ourselves to have apprehended; but rather, forgetting the things that are behind, press towards the mark for the prize.

Help us daily to build upon the sure certitude of the abiding foundation, even Jesus Christ, higher and higher the temple fabric of a holy life. May our days be more full of heroisms of obedience and of faith, and of simple trust and holy friendship with Thyself. May we cultivate a more wholesome and healthy abhorrence of all that is evil. May we cleave with increasing tenacity of purpose and with fond affection to all that is good. Enlighten Thou us day by day, and lead us further and further into a

knowledge of Thyself, and the happy possession of that life which comes from knowing Thee. And oh! do Thou so mould our outward lives, that in them all we may find God, and by them all be helped nearer to Him. Do Thou show us the path in which Thou wouldst have us to walk. May we keep open our minds for all the indications of Thy providence and Thy will. May we hold our wishes in suspense until Thou dost declare Thy purpose. May we follow the Light of the world, and so be delivered from walking in darkness. We beseech Thee for strength according to our day; for grace to resist temptation and to profit by it; for power to do Thy will heartily and vigorously; for the submissive spirits to which the knowledge of Thy will shall be enough to constitute an absolute commandment; for the patient hearts that shall wait upon Thee; and do Thou stay us, we beseech Thee, upon Thine own sweetness, and give us possession, not only of the hope, but of the fruition of Thy salvation, that we may rejoice in the Lord all our days, and pass from strength to strength until we appear before Thee in glory. We ask Thee to accept our thanks for all Thy loving tenderness and miracles of care extended to each of us. But, with this large experience which some of us have made of a wise providence, that defends and delivers us, and saves us from the consequences of many a fault and many a sin, may we be led to a more loving and constant and happy trust in Thyself, and quiet our hearts, which shall wait whatsoever Thy providence may still have to unfold for us.

We commend ourselves now, O Lord, to Thy gracious care, beseeching Thee to accept our poor thanksgiving and to bless us with the rich answers of Thy mercy through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

S.

LXXXIII.

O THOU who art the Master of all men and the one Shepherd of Thy flock, deign, we beseech Thee, to visit us this morning, the anniversary festival of Thy uprising. We entreat Thee this morning that Thou wilt resolve the questioning of each doubtful heart and give peace to every troubled soul. Do Thou speak the word of pardon which it is Thine alone to give. Be pleased, blessed Lord, to hear our prayers. Assuage the grief of any of us who may be grieved. Rebuke the evil in our hearts. Implant in our hearts the desire after that which is good, and chiefly after Thyself. We hide ourselves before God our Father. Lord, wilt Thou satisfy our mouth with good things, and strengthen and refresh us this day with the bread of heaven.

Father, we have dared to come into Thy presence and lift up our eyes to Thy majesty. Unworthy, conscious of our unworthiness, and ashamed of ourselves, we nevertheless draw near, our only claim being in the Victim who was slain for us. Terrible art Thou in Thy holiness, and holy art Thou, and we are unclean men and women, with unclean hearts and unclean lips; who have done evil deeds; who are full of weakness; who have given way to passion and wicked desires; who have forsaken and forgotten Thee; who have turned upon Thee the back and not the face. Yea, we are all of us unclean. God be merciful to us, for we are miserable sinners.

Nevertheless the sins we confess we truly desire to forsake, and we believe Thou wilt forgive, for we come in the name of our High-Priest. Oh, our Father, we beseech Thee, look upon us, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and for His blessed Name's sake be pitiful unto us. Speak peace to every troubled heart.

We are not worthy to be called Thy sons and daughters;

we are not worthy even to be called Thy servants; but we bless Thee that Thou hast taught us to aspire to a nearer name than bondsmen. Although we are not even worthy of this, Thou hast in Thy great love taught us to call Thee Father. Now, our Father, we come to Thee pleading Thy Son's Name.

We beseech Thee, shed abroad in our hearts a spirit of child-like confidence, and teach each one of us to give himself up to Thee, wholly, entirely. Accept us, O God; satisfy Thy people so that we may go from this place of prayer with our hearts quickened in Christ, our will to serve Thee confirmed, our inner life established and strengthened, that we may magnify our Lord as we go through life.

May our work from week-day to week-day be better done, more in the spirit of Christ's disciples, more after the pattern of Christ Himself. Give us grace to bear whatever trials, temporal or spiritual, Thou art pleased to put upon us; and in times of sorrow may we have the comfort of the Holy Ghost, in times of temptation may we be strengthened to do the will of God, and in times of weariness may we patiently endure to the end. Lord, Thou art the confidant of each heart; Thou knowest the way by which we have come, and Thou knowest the path by which we shall have to grope hereafter. Be our countenance, our encouragement, our staff, our stay, until we have the victory.

The Lord help us to wait for Him this day. Be Thou present to help all in distress. Strengthen the hand of faith to grasp Thee; wipe the tear from every sorrowing eye; give encouragement to the weak in faith. Be not far from any of us. Thou art a Friend, a Father, a Saviour in Jesus Christ for evermore. Amen.

LXXXIV.

THOU, O Father, who holdest the earth and all the inhabitants thereof as in the hollow of Thy hand, who buildest up the heavens like a tent for us to dwell in, who rulest the raging sea, Thou who art the King, immortal, invisible, help us to come unto Thee this morning with deep reverence and godly fear, adoring Thee, the God of creation and providence, the author of our being, the guide of our way, the length of our days, and the joy of our hearts. By Thee and through Thee are all things. We magnify Thy Name for Thy great kindness to us in giving us strength and health to gather ourselves this day in this house of prayer. We remember specially the sins we have committed since last we gathered together within these walls. Grant unto us contrite spirits, we beseech Thee. We acknowledge that we have not loved Thee as Thou hast loved us, that we have not revered Thee as Thy children ought to do, that we have not served Thee as Thy servants ought to do.

We confess, O God, that we have not laid to heart Thy great kindness to us. We have not set our hearts upon Thy glory and sought after it. We have not loved Thy Son, who died to save us, as Thou wouldst have us to do. We have sinned against Thy law by disobedience, and against Thy Gospel by ingratitude. We confess our sins, O God, and we can but come with shamefacedness and confusion before Thee, acknowledging them. Thou righteous God, whose wrath we have provoked, whose condemnation we have deserved, enter not into judgment with Thy servants before Thee. Remember, we beseech Thee, Thy Son, our Lord, who is our righteousness; and grant that by Him, who is our hope, we may obtain justification in Thy sight.

O Father, let Thy peace rest upon us. Still the accusing

voice of conscience. Quicken us now for Thy service for the future. Make us, we beseech Thee, consecrated men and women, set apart for the service of the Saviour, and like unto Him who is our Priest, that we may be priests unto Him. Let Thy gracious Spirit inspire our preaching, that it may be acceptable to Thee. Let the answer come, and the benediction that comes in sorrow—the blessing of our Father.

Lord, we pray, now that we are assembled together, that we may feel that Thou art assembled with us. And we are come together in Thy Name that our burdens may be lightened; that we may aspire to serve and love Thee better; that our fears may be dispelled through Thy Name; that we may be joined anew to our Saviour; and that we may take courage for the future.

Be Thou our Chieftain, O Son of God; be Thou the Captain of our Salvation. Make us charitable, peaceful, modest; make us in all things to seek after Thy gentleness and meekness and courage. Help us to live as the people of God in this dark earth, glorifying our Father in Heaven by our good deeds which men shall behold.

Blessed Jesus, we pray Thee for all who may be assembled over all parts of our city and land this day worshipping Thee. We pray for all who may be gathered together in prayer. We pray for the individual members of our families. We pray for those whose hearts are with us but who are absent in body. Let one large Catholic benediction be bestowed upon us. May our Redeemer, our Righteousness, our Brother be with us. We pray that we may all rejoice and be glad in Him. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen. γ.

LXXXV.

FATHER, who hast permitted us to meet again in prayer, help us to remember those who looked forward to being

here. O God, we feel sometimes sad because Thou hast been pleased to take unto Thyself those who have hitherto been gathered with us in prayer. Lord, Thy gracious will be done. We desire to thank Thee for sparing us who are now here. We thank Thee that we may enjoy the ministry of Thy Gospel and worship Thee. O our Father, we give Thee humble thanks that Thou hast permitted so many of us to assemble together. Oh, we pray Thee, Lord, comfort all the sick and those who are so infirm that they have not been able to wait upon Thee in public assembly. Be very gracious to them. We pray for all the sick. Give them the joy and consolation of Thy Spirit. We pray Thee that Thy word spoken everywhere, in all Christian lands, in all parts of the earth, may so prosper by Thy Spirit that it may build up Thy people, and increase in joy and strength the Church of the Living God.

We pray Thee, Lord, bless all the branches of Thy Church. Bless, we beseech Thee, Thy missionary servants and all who, by means temporal or spiritual, are trying to spread Thy Gospel. Let Thy word of mercy have a charm for the guilty. O Lord, do Thou visit those who call themselves Thy children and are not awakened to their real state. We pray God bless our Sovereign Lady, our Queen, and strengthen her as Thou alone canst. Graciously bless Her Majesty's ministers, and all the members of the Royal House, and all who are high in the State. Give wisdom to the Queen's counsellors. The Lord be pleased to give prosperity to all our industries, and success to all right enterprises. Prosper arts and sciences among us, and teach the people obedience to laws human and Divine, having respect one for another. Do thou correct vice spread through society, and purify and ennoble the people, and be pleased to save the nation from practical ungodliness, and extend the fear of God to every class of society. Bless the United States of America. Be very gracious to all the

nations. Give them the fear of God and wisdom according to Thy mind.

Our Father, preserve peace upon the earth, if it be Thy pleasure, and let the nations increase in liberty and godliness. Breathe peace into all our hearts. Fill us this day with Thy holy Spirit. Hush the voice of passion and pride, and conquer our wandering and rebel thoughts. Help us to take in Thy truth, learn Thy will, receive Thy Spirit, and walk in Thy love for Thy glory. Amen.

γ.

LXXXVI.

O JEHOVAH, Thou art the God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, Ruler of princes, Dispenser of justice on the earth, visiting the iniquities of the father upon the children, who art in every place beholding the evil and the good, at whose hands cometh prosperity and adversity, before Thee, great God of heaven and earth and the nations, we bow down and worship. Great things hast Thou done for us and our fathers before us in this our land. Great deliverances hast Thou wrought for them in the old times. Thou didst set them on high and give them a large inheritance. We have entered into their labours and Thou hast blessed us exceedingly.

We bless Thee for the dead saints who have glorified Thy doctrine and have left us a legacy of holy counsel. We bless Thee for the prosperity Thou hast given to Thy people. O God, Thou knowest how little we have deserved such abundant goodness at Thy hand. How often we have withheld the glory due to Thee. How little have we trusted in Thee in adversity compared with what Thou hast done. O Lord, we have been unrighteous; we have glorified our own bow and our own sword. O Lord, have mercy upon us and deliver us from Thy tremendous judgments.

We desire to praise Thee that Thou hast made us members of Thy Church in this land. We bless Thee for spiritual, temporal, and congregational blessings. We confess that we have not been true to Thy covenant, neither have we been diligent nor dutiful as we should have been. O our Father, we confess our sins, our personal unworthiness. We confess the sins of our home life, we confess the sins of our congregational life, we confess the sins of our nation and people. The Lord have mercy upon us, the Lord give the spirit of repentance to all, the Lord give to us here a humble spirit of dependence upon Christ. Make us wise with heavenly wisdom; may we know what we ought to do. Make us sober. Help us to understand Thy will concerning us, and give us grace to do it. Make Christ our Lord and let us be filled with the spirit of His example. Help us to strive after obedience to all that He has commanded us to do. Enable us to conquer our passions and keep ourselves free from self-indulgence. Help us to be pure and holy-minded, and help us in our endeavours to keep guarded, we beseech Thee, from the temptations of life and the things that make unclean. Help us to be honourable, fulfilling our debts to all.

O Lord, we pray Thee that Thou wilt make our homes orderly; grant that we may worship Thee in our homes as in our hearts. O God, we pray Thee that Thou wilt save us from all that savours of guile in business. Deliver us, we beseech Thee, from seeking our own selfish enlargement. And we pray Thee, Lord, enable us to do what Thou givest us to do for Thy glory. Help us to give liberally and to think large thoughts, and to be of an open nature and charitable men; to think with charity, to judge with charity all those who differ from us. Help us, we beseech Thee, to seek the good of others. Help us to be all things to all men, that we may win men for God, for heaven.

Inspire Thy workers with the spirit of holiness and meekness. Take away all self-righteousness from us. Help us to keep ourselves clear of every touch of vanity. Help us to see more clearly the beam in our own eye. Make us to be severe with ourselves, forbearing with our neighbours. Make us desirous for Thy honour. O God, do Thou make us to be remembrances on behalf of a nation that readily tends to forget Thee. May every branch of Thy holy Catholic Church in England be successful and be drawn closer, united in one bond of union for one common end. Rebuke, O Lord, the prevailing ungodliness and indifference to Divine things. Do Thou restore life where it has grown feeble. We ask these blessings, Lord, with earnestness and humility at Thy footstool. For Thy Name's sake let men repent; and revive and strengthen domestic and personal godliness in every part of the population, that the kingdom of Jesus Christ may be extended in this world, that we may hand down to our children and our children's children a heritage of religion undefiled. We ask it for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

LXXXVII.

O God, too high for us to attain to, some few perhaps look up to us while we look up to others whose greater wisdom we feel, and these again look up to others who move on levels of thought above them; but we all look up to Thee, perfection of beauty, Lord of life, Ruler of the universe. Thine is the grace and the power and the glory and the beauty and the majesty. Thine is the kingdom. Thou art exalted as head over all; both riches and honour are Thine, and Thou dost give strength unto all. Therefore we thank Thee, O God, and trust Thee. It is good to think of Thee, and to remember that we have a Father who is the Ruler of princes, the Governor of the kings of the

earth, beyond whose control nothing passes, who judges according to every man's work, who with an understanding that is infinite is seeing evermore to our true interests, upon whom devolves the burden of planning and providing for our education. It is good to think of Thee and to remember that Thou hast appointed our time; that we are not fortuitous developments, but Thy curious work; that we are not wandering waifs among the shadows of time, but children; that we are not only that which appears, but are more than can be seen; that we are spirits related to the spiritual world.

Great Father, come nigh to us, awaken and draw out the filial elements in us, quicken with Thy hidden touch to increase of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness and faith. Make the heart of sons to grow stronger in us to the government of the heart and the flesh, to the sanctifying of the desires of the mind. Help us to meditate and *wish* in the light of Thy countenance; so may all gladness be ours, our meditations be sweet, and our wishes corrected where they are wrong; where they are worldly deepen and sanctify and make us mighty to rule the flesh.

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the pleasures of the summer day, for the world of beauty in the midst of which we walk, for the much Thou hast given us to admire and hast taught us to admire, for the loved joys which are ours, for the work of grace, for the dawnings of light after anxious gloom, for some new stimulus to thought, for sunny memories, for edifying fellowships, for flashes of inspiration. We thank Thee for the springs Thou sendest into the valleys, for the birds that utter sweet songs of praise, for the watering of the hills from Thy chambers, and for the food which Thou bringest forth out of the earth. May it please Thee, to preserve for our use the fruits of the earth, so that in due time we may enjoy them. And bless the husbandmen who till the fields, make them glad, if it may be, bringing them

through straits and difficulties into larger blessings. Bless the humble toilers who toil for us at the plough, the rude simple folk whose lives are hardened; may health and peace abide in their cottages, may their children grow up and receive some better inheritance and education. May it please Thee to bless those who go down to the sea in ships, all those who labour in dark places of danger, and those who are paid to fight for us; let every man wherein he is called abide in God. And let us strengthen one another to perfect love and good works.

O Lord, look upon Thy family; deliver us from hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. Make us to be of use to men, seeking their good, especially of such as are poor in that in which we happen to be rich, all those who need that which we can supply. May the learned recognise that they are debtors to the unlearned, and the strong that they are debtors to the weak. Inspire and guide with Thy spirit the few that are endowed above the many with gifts of influence and resources, to the end that they may minister to others. Help those who have a dream that seems a vision, to utter it honestly and faithfully; and grant to the sons of wisdom to be ever redeeming the opportunity with wise words. Be with them to whom the voice says, "Write," to keep them pure. May integrity and a good understanding lead those who make our laws to such decisions as shall duly meet the needs of the times.

We thank Thee for all worthy and noble crafts, for the service of large-hearted philanthropists. We thank Thee for the proof that Thou art among us by the working of the Holy Spirit, and the promise that we shall yet see greater and better things, and in wishing greater blessings for all the people of the earth.

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee; and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered

together in Thy Name Thou wilt grant their requests. Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of Thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

δ.

LXXXVIII.

FATHER of men, who hast made us for Thyself, and wilt give us rest at length when Thou shalt have found rest in gaining us to be fully Thine, we come before Thee this morning with our broken petitions. We must not expect to enter into peace until Thou art satisfied, and we would not. The cross must needs be our lot, as Thou art crucified for us, as Thou art, and wilt be, till all sin and evil is purged away, and the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of the Father. Then, then will come Thy Sabbath and ours, and Thou shalt make us glad. Help us in the meanwhile to trust and to believe that Thou carest for us. Thy gracious purpose is in all our pain. Help us to receive daily with our daily bread the power to be sons of God in fellowship with Jesus Christ, to hope and quietly wait for Thy salvation, to look from the seen to the unseen, from the temporal to the eternal; for which we plead,—power to reign as kings, to lift ourselves above the emotions of the flesh and the things that tend to weaken or defile, to be sympathetic with one another, to seek the things that edify, and to extract the moral usefulness of dark things.

Let none of us be beggars or slaves in the world, who are sons, and who are called to overcome the world, and to whom the world belongs; but may we take up and main-

tain our birthright as the children of our Father who is in heaven, who has provided for us such means of education, who has taught us so many things, and has borne with us so long, who pursues us so persistently when we try to fly from Him, who has sent us Jesus Christ, and has raised up again and again other masters. Even when we are least worthy in our own eyes and in the esteem of others, save us from sinking into self-contempt, and set us aspiring afresh to be more and better than we are. What does it matter, men think sometimes, if we continue to go wrong who have already strayed so far, if we go on till we perish in corruption, we of whom none but bad things are expected? Grant such, O Lord, to know that they are Thine. When any of us are weary and tired, and inclined to let circumstances drag us at their pleasure, to be reckless with the recklessness of self-despair, give new strength unto us, rouse us into a sense of sonship, that we may be heroes in the strife.

O God, keep us in good heart, full of animation and energy, constrained continually to do our very best; and may we feel the importance of our doing well and becoming perfect in the interests of mankind, for the sake of the family to which we belong; and that, being members of that body which is the Lord's, we must needs labour to be braver and nobler, and cannot act unworthily without injuring others, for one sinner destroyeth many, and no man perisheth alone in his iniquity. Let each of us be a true light in the midst of darkness; though our shadow be not much, let it be always a healing shadow, and let those who sit beneath it be strengthened and revived.

Thou to whom we offer these our petitions, to whom we come again and again with our prayers, strengthen us to do good; for with these sacrifices Thou art well pleased. Thus will Thy pleasure be for ever and ever in ourselves, and in the world; and give us in all our endeavours Thy

love. Preserve us from being awkward and clumsy. When our benevolent attempts are ineffectual, when we err to the injury of those whom we strive to help, is it not because we are not sufficiently warm in the cause? Lord, make us wise with the wisdom of love, that we may give counsel and comfort. We thank Thee, the source of good, for all true work that has been done by us. We pray that both gift and skill may be exercised in righteousness. We commend those who are able to serve Thee. Pity the frivolous and those who toil from day to day to gratify themselves; beget in them higher desires. Thy pity, too, be upon all in this place who are trouble-tossed, upon all who have sorrow and woe, for those who groan in secret behind a smiling mask, for the transgressor, for the poor hunted criminal, raged against by all. O God, do Thou pity; let Thy arms of mercy be about us, even until the last lost sheep of the wilderness be brought home, and we be able to offer praise in which there shall be no note of sadness, as, joining in the universal song we say, "Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Amen.

δ.

LXXXIX.

LORD, Thou Holy Lamb of God, grant us Thy peace. Thou Saviour of the world, save us, we beseech Thee. Lord Jesus, hear and answer, and deliver us for Thy mercy's sake, and grant us Thy salvation. We come to Thee, O God, and beseech Thee to receive us, as now we lift up to Thee our hearts and voices, and adore Thy infinite Majesty waiting before Thee for Thy blessing. Almighty God hear Thou the penitent voice with which we come into Thy presence, for it becomes us to cry also for mercy. We are sinners against Thee, and have done wickedly. We who

have gone astray from Thy ways, and wandered after the devices of our own hearts, we who have set our own wills against Thine, and have rebelled against Thy gracious and tender love, O God, forgive us. Hear Thou the sigh of the penitent. Accept the offering of the hearts that are broken.

May we come to Thee asking for mercy, and find it. We come to Thee, O Lord, and ask for Thy gracious help, that we may be better able to bear life's burden. Oh, grant, we beseech Thee, that the tangled skeins of life may be disentangled in Thy holy love. Grant, O Lord, that the dust of life's conflict may be put away from us, and the mire of life may be entirely washed away. Oh that some celestial sounds of heaven may to-day fall upon our ears; and give us the peace and the blessedness which pertaineth to Thyself. Oh that we may catch something of the rapture of the redeemed; and though all these glories of the sky are as yet hidden from us, may the eye of faith still behold somewhat of the rapture which we shall experience beyond the grave.

O God, we ask Thee to give us the deepest sense of pardon, and for Thy peace to possess our hearts. May we lay aside all anger, malice, and uncharitableness. Put away the secret sin, the sin which doth so easily beset us. Help us to look to Christ and to Christ only, the Author and Finisher of our faith. In Christ we begin to live. Thou knowest the burden of every heart, O God; come Thou and pour out upon us a blessing. Thou knowest the need of every heart; come Thou and supply it. Look down upon the sorrowful. We thank Thee for purity and sweetness and patience. We thank Thee for the faith which conquers at the supreme moment of death. We thank Thee for the dead who die in the Lord.

We pray Thee to come into households lonely and desolate. We beseech Thee to look upon any who come into

Thy house with feelings of joy and love. Thou hast made them conquerors. Thou hast crowned them with joy in their households, or in their business. Grant that the full cup of life's delight may be poured out before Thyself in oblations of praise. May we not forget in our moments of blessedness that all good is from God, and that the best good, the only good, is Thyself.

Gracious God, we pray Thee to uphold Thy servants everywhere. Have mercy upon them in all lands, and among all kindred. Wherever holy men shall lift to Thee the notes of praise and prayer, there be Thou. We pray Thee that peace may be placed upon a secure foundation, which shall depend upon righteousness and justice. Let the people be free, let the struggling ones come into the light of liberty. May there be a demonstration of the Spirit of Thy Word.

O God, we beseech Thee to let Thy Kingdom come, and Thy will be done in our land, in all lands, in our hearts, in all men's hearts; and so grant, that the world over, Christ may be the only Ruler, and Thyself recognised as the only God and Father of mankind. Hear us now, and bless us. Fill us with Thy peace. Come to each, come to all. May this day be one of the days of the Son of God. Grant that none may refuse Thy grace, or look back to this day longing for its return, but unavailingly as the day of grace once past and past for ever. Lord let it not be so. Oh, may all here accept and rejoice in the knowledge, and in the salvation of Jesus Christ, our Lord Amen.

6.

XC.

ETERNAL and ever-blessed God, Thou alone art worthy of the praise and the adoration of the creatures whom Thou hast made. And we bless Thee that Thou dost per-

mit us to come into Thy presence, and call upon Thee with the voice of praise and prayer. All things that Thou hast made do but express Thy glory and Thy power; and we see everywhere the shining forth of the Divine mind, and the marks of that strength wherewith Thou hast set fast the mountains and hast established the earth.

O God, how great Thou art! Who can understand Thee in Thy wonderful Being, uncaused, independent, absolutely perfect and perfectly blessed? Not a star that shines in the firmament, not a flower that peeps between the verdure of the earth, not a drop that breaks from the tossed wave and flashes in the sunlight, but proclaims the goodness of our God. And we thank Thee for all things bright and fair, for sunshine and the song of birds, and for the air that blows, and for the life that we inherit. O Lord, grant that the whole creation may be wholly purged from all that comes between Thy creatures and Thyself; and may there be nothing in all the world but God and those who come from and recognise Him with constant trust and submission.

Everlasting Father, do Thou take away the darkness and blight of sin, which silences the sweetest notes, and takes away the joyous bliss from our souls. O God, what is this darkness into which this earth is rolled? Is it nothing but a shadow which Thy exceeding light has made? Whence comes it? Great and mysterious questions, not to be answered except within ourselves, in that Thou dost forgive, and that Thou wilt overcome sin for us. Therefore, O Lord, we come to Thee now, and beseech Thee to deliver us from this power.

We bless Thee that Thou dost show Thyself ready to save, and that the blood of Thy Son Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. May that blood renew every life. And fill us with Thy Holy Spirit, and may we walk in all our ways as those who are nearing heaven, have Christ to be

a Saviour, and God, through Him, to be a gracious and forgiving God.

We are very glad for Thy mercy. We thank Thee that Thou hast upheld us, and taken away the burdens of life. We bless Thee that when sorrow has come Thou hast strengthened us to endure, and we have been enabled to suffer and be strong. We come now into Thy house to renew our vows, and ask Thee to come and be altogether our Father and our God. And if there be any wanderers, call them back to Thyself. If there be any who have gone away from Thee, receive them once again, Lord. So may the backslider be restored and built up and confirmed in Thy holy faith. And if there be any sons and daughters of sorrow here, any from whom Thou hast taken earthly possessions, any whom Thou hast surrounded with all the inextricable skeins of life's confusion, any from whom Thou hast taken away loved ones, or who are themselves going wearily downward to the confines of life, any who are watching by the side of their dear ones whom Thou hast afflicted—be gracious, and compassionate, and merciful, and pitiful to all. May there come to them a profound peace, a quiet calm resting in Thyself, filled with Thine own serenity.

Lord, help us in the daily work that lies before us. May we do our work as faithful labourers. May we ever live as seeing Him who is invisible, and as the workmen of Jesus Christ. Make us wise and strong to resist the subtle temptation, and to say to the tempter, "Get thee behind me"; and having done all through Thine Almighty strength, at last may we, O God, be strong and rely unto the end in the power of Thy Holy Spirit. O blessed Spirit, come and fill each heart. Make each breast a temple wherein Thou dost dwell; make it a home where the gracious and Christian virtues may be exhibited. May we

in public and in our homes, anywhere and everywhere be Thine.

So do Thou bless us, and bless Thy people everywhere. Do Thou extend the knowledge of the Redeemer's Gospel, and may many souls be brought unto Thee. Bless all who call upon Thee, throwing their belief into whatever creed. Grace, mercy, and peace be with all those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and in truth. Bring war to an end; establish peace. Spread abroad light and liberty. Let liberty abound; and enlarge men's hearts and increase all human wisdom and skill. Over every activity of men's mind and body may there shine the light of faith. May the Gospel permeate all thought and fill all action. And soon bring the glad day when the world shall be Thine own, and every man shall be Christ's. Hear us, O Lord, and bless and receive us now and for ever, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

6.

XCI.

O LORD, we come this morning to Thy mercy-seat, and we thank Thee for permitting us to put our petitions at Thy feet. Thou didst cast out Adam from the garden, and didst plant flaming swords guarding the tree of Life; but thanks to Thy Name, Thou hast revealed to us Christ, who has taken the swords into Himself, by whom we now come. Thanks to Thyself, thanks for the wonderful gift by which Thou hast made for us the wonderful way. In giving Christ, Thou hast given Thyself for us. In Jesus Christ, Thou hast not spared Thyself in not sparing Him. We know that, outcast and outlawed by sin, we never could have come to Thee in any other way. O God, when we think about it, the very greatness of Thy love seems to make our unbelief; it seems too great for us to believe that Thou shouldst love us so. Lord, let us not be among

the triflers; let us not slight that which Thou hast given in giving Christ.

Quicken us, O Lord, for we are often asleep when we call ourselves awake. These wonders are too great for us; our minds are often confounded when our hearts would yield. Help us to give ourselves up to Thy Son. Oh, how much we want! We seem to be all want, we are nothing but want; but we come through Christ's merits for the unsearchable riches of Thy grace. We come to ask supplies to drive our want away. We thank Thee for all our worldly comforts in the midst of so much misery. O Lord, we ask above all for a revival. Father, how dull, how slow, how cold, how hard the hearts of Thy redeemed people are. We know this from ourselves; we deplore our want of love. O God, revive; O God, bless; O God, give the Spirit largely. Make this Church a living Church, and make every member a living soul to Thee. O God, we confess with much shame how we avoid obligations, how much we try to persuade ourselves that it is the duty of other men to visit the sick while we stay at home. Lord, make us to feel that we need to be converted over again; make us to feel that Christ's burden is light; make us to rejoice in making others rejoice, and in helping and comforting one another. Bless the deacons. Grant that a blessing may rest upon all who are visiting their fellow-members to-day. Quicken the Sunday School; encourage the hearts of the teachers. O God, let Thy Divine blessing rest upon the teachers who have to labour on through all difficulties; and grant that all such may be helped and encouraged by the abounding grace of Jesus. We beseech Thee, O Lord, to save our young people from the false spirit abroad; may they work steadily on, not thinking of pleasure or caring for praise, not living for excitement. O Lord, let there be with the children a steady, glorious going on; may the presence of Christ be with

each, making their work full of light and joy. Grant that there may be many children led to the Cross, the infinite Cross.

Grant such blessings to-day, save to-day, turn the hearts of men to-day. Thine is the power. Thou hast promised us, O Lord; we look to Thee for a blessing now. Grant it for Christ's sake.

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XCII.

DIVINE FATHER, through Jesus Christ we ask Thee to help us. Our Father, may our whole souls go out to Thee asking and entreating for a blessing. May we not cling to the dust—this is our constant prayer. The dust of this world is about us, we would fly to Thee. Lord, help us to come. O our Father, Thou dost not wait for us to be good. Thou dost not wait for us to look to Thee; Thou dost look us into loving Thee. So look upon us now from Thy dwelling-place in heaven. Grant that we may find Thee, and in finding Thee find peace to our souls. Thou high and mighty One who dost inhabit the heavens, come and inhabit us now, and make us to love Thee, turning us from the things of the world and drawing us by Thine own love up to Thyself.

We would hang upon Thy Word. Lift us up, and grant that we may find, that we may feel, how true it is, that Christ is raised from the dead and that all things have become new. Lead us out of darkness and make us to rejoice in the Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. Thou hast by Thy love brought us here to-day: Thou dost always love us. We beseech Thee, O Father, that all of us may be sanctified this day. May we feel under us the Everlasting Arms, under us the infinite support; and not only may this be so, but may it encourage and strengthen us in doing our part—our part is by striving to do aright Thy work.

Thou hast honoured us by giving us a share of the work. We rejoice that in sparing us out of heaven a little longer to serve Thee here, to help to heal broken-hearted sufferers and guide back worse sufferers—those suffering from sin—to Thee, that we may delight in that unto which Thou hast called us. Be pleased to grant a blessing upon all our worship. Listen to all Thy children's prayers. Let not one now in this place of prayer go from it without a distinct blessing in coming. Let every poor sufferer get more to know Thy loving-kindness and tender mercy. We know that we have so much sin that we must go through some process, through trial and suffering, to bring us into fitness by sanctification for our inheritance in light. So we may thank Thee for suffering, thank Thee for trial. Not with sad resignation we would learn Thy will: we would rejoice in seeing how good Thou art. May this make our spirits quiet and heal the fever of our nature, making us to work for Thee, rejoice to see Thee and to know more of Thee day by day. Come, bless the Church, and bless the deacons and those who work in the schools, and those who have great responsibility; and may the children find their Father in Heaven. We would beseech Thee to bless and comfort all mourners, that in the Cross they may find their solace.

O God, sanctify and raise up others, as one by one we rapidly file out of this world; and grant that we may see before we vanish hence many rising up to take our places. God, do Thou bless missionaries, and all who work in this way at home or abroad. Prepare the world for Thy second coming, filling it with the light of Thy Spirit; and we beseech Thee to hear these prayers in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

XCIII.

O ALMIGHTY GOD! Maker of all things in heaven above or in the earth below, we worship Thee through Jesus Christ our Lord. We believe that Thou hast made an open way into the Kingdom for every one that believeth; our hope is in Thee, O God! and in the great Atonement which Thou hast made for guilty sinners. Thou hast so loved the world as to give Thine only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish but have everlasting life. Lord! we believe, help Thou our unbelief.

We are here before Thee to-night, at the close of this Sabbath day. Some of us know a little of one another, and how little! Some are wholly strangers to us; but no one is a stranger to Thee. Thou knowest, not a little, but all about us. And we praise Thy wonderful goodness that we may all come to Thee and become Christians—men of Christ. Thou wilt listen to him who through long years has desired to serve Thee; Thou wilt listen to him who has wasted long years, forgetting Thee and heeding not Thy commandments.

Thou wilt listen to the elder brother, even when his spirit is harsh and bitter; and Thou speakest as the Eternal Father in loving words to an erring and unforgiving son. And, O God! Thou wilt listen to the returning prodigal, to the penitent who has wasted his substance in riotous living; who comes back to Thee naked and poor and ashamed; and hear his prayer even in this place to-night. Thou art waiting to be gracious, and Thou desirest to do us good.

Here before Thee are the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the aged and the young; but we all come to Thee and we all come in the faith of Jesus.

Lord, receive us! If we have the right faith, do Thou increase our faith. If, as yet, we have not learned to trust

Thee, manifest Thyself to us as Thou dost not unto the world; and may all of us here look to Thee, and, asking a blessing, be enabled to trust Thee to-night; and may there be many here who shall be able from the heart to testify: "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even while we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath glorified us all together in Christ." Oh that we may know our sins forgiven; that we may have the witness of the Spirit of God with our spirits; that we may hear the still small voice which says, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee, for His Name's sake. Go and sin no more."

Lord, we praise Thee that not only hast Thou given us a Redeemer who will bear the burden of our sins, but that when he died for our sins He rose again for our justification. We believe the holy Gospel, that He ascended up on high and has received gifts for men. We bless Thee that Thou art able to give us out of the rich stores of Thy bounty, to every man according to His need, to every heart according to the fulness of Thy grace. Thou, O Lord! knowest us altogether, Thou knowest the infirmity of temper, the uncleanness of the heart, the uncertainty of purpose, the desultory vacillation that keeps so many of us back from serving Thee.

O Lord! Thou art the Good Physician, able to put Thy finger on the disease and to heal it by a word. Oh, heal our hearts, that they may be still in Thee and as Thou wouldst have them be. Thou art able to do for us exceedingly above all we can ask or think; and we would bring to Thee our wants, burdens, needs. And Thou, O Christ! if there be in this congregation to-night men or women that are labouring under heavy burdens that are hard to bear, and knowing not how to carry their burdens lovingly and well,—if there be some one here that sees not the path that must be taken—O Lord of light and comfort! enter into

that troubled heart to-night, and may the perplexed and weary one find direction and rest, hoping in Thee.

There are those who have come up here to-night and have to bear burdens of another kind. Their heart is blind, their mind is dim, their faith is feeble, they are troubled with many a doubt. O Lord! reveal Thyself to these, and may the light of Thy glorious Gospel, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shine into their hearts, that they may know Thee, whom to know is love and eternal joy.

Holy Father! Thou art all good and pure, our best and highest thoughts can know Thee not; Thou lovest us every one; Thou hast promised to give us a full salvation; Thou hast demanded of us our services here in Thy house on this Thy holy day.

Young men and maidens, old men and children, we may bow the head at Thy footstool. Again we would bring our hearts to Thee; Lord! take us and make us what Thou wouldst have us to be; building us up in purity, creating within us clean hearts, and guiding us in the path of Thy commandments.

Strengthen us to do Thy holy will, teach us to do good and to be good; enable us to follow in the footsteps of Christ,—serving our own generation according to the will of God until we shall fall asleep in Jesus. To this end bless this service to-night; may every one receive from Thee help and blessing. Inspire the words which shall be uttered. Remember Thy servant, that Thy message may be clothed with power. Inspire the people, that they have the hearing ear and the understanding heart; and may the issue of this night's service, in this place, be to the glory of God in the recovering of lost souls.

If we ask this for ourselves, we ask it alike for others, for Thou art ever ready to hear and answer us. Hear, in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and to-night may the blessing of our Lord, that maketh rich and addeth no sorrow there-

with, fall upon us like the dew and dwell in peace within us. Hear and bless us now for the sake of Jesus our Redeemer.

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XCIV.

WE bless Thee, our Father, that Thou hast set up a mercy-seat with the precious holy blood of Thy Beloved. It is a great joy to us that there is no veil now to keep us back from that mercy-seat, but that the veil of the Temple was broken in twain when Jesus said, "It is finished." Truly, Lord, when we come to speak to the Most High, it must be with deep humility of spirit; for the family gathered before Thee approach with deep reverence. We have all of us sinned, how much we cannot tell; but there is much sin that is visible to us. There is, besides much visible sin, much transgression within the heart which we are too blind to perceive; for we confess it is a part of the mischief of sin that prevents us seeing it. We do better to put ourselves before Thee now without extenuation or excuse, but simply crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Lord, may every one breathe that prayer this morning. It was in the days of our boyhood that we first came to Thee with the penitential sigh; and Thou didst teach us to find peace in Christ by faith in Him. Now, even now, we would look to Jesus on the cross, having no other confidence, leaning with entire faith on Him as at first; and we pray that the same sweet sense of peace may come over us now. Being justified, we have peace with God by Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom also we have received the atonement. For, Lord, we acknowledge we have now as much need to come to Thee as in the beginning. Since we have been Thy people we have committed sins peculiar to our state which we could not commit before. When we have been a little troubled or the road seemed blocked up, we have been half-afraid, nay, sometimes as much afraid as if

we had no God to fly to. Of this we are greatly ashamed, for it tendeth to dishonour Thy Name.

Lord, have mercy upon our little faith. O Lord, blot out this sin. We remember how Thou didst forbid Thy servants Moses and Aaron to enter the promised land, because of their little faith. Oh, let us have the full blessings of the Covenant, notwithstanding our utter unworthiness. Some of Thy servants have to confess to much worldliness. How much some of Thy children try to be Thy children and yet friends of the world. Lord, this is our grief. Do Thou, Lord, make it a grief unto themselves. Raise up in this Church a people spiritually minded, that shall practise self-denial, that shall seek after the things which glorify God only, and not mind their own will, but the will of their Heavenly Father. We dare not lift up our face to Thy throne, were it not that Jesus Christ our Advocate is there on purpose that if any man sin His advocacy may be used. Dear Saviour, there is no sinner that Thou art not ready to pardon. Dear Advocate, Thou hast died for us that we may be accepted in the Beloved.

We come then to be filled with Thy fulness. We come like broken vessels, that Thou mayest re-make us and then fill us. Seeing our great defilement, we look up to our atonement and there would rest.

O Lord, we would further ask this day for preparedness for the path out of this world into the future. Thou hast, during the past week, taken some dear servants of Thine out of this Church, and Thou wilt soon take others. Let us not tie knots to fix ourselves to the world, for if so there will be the more to cut. May ungodly men and women take warning, for behold the Bridegroom cometh. May they see to it that they be washed from their defilement and made clean in the precious blood of Jesus.

Perhaps there are some here who, out of their long life, have not spent an hour with God yet. O Lord, save such.

Let the words come home to them: "Set your house in order, for you must die and not live."

As for those whom Thou wilt spare for many years to come, let it be that the longer we live the more we may obey Thee. We see so many things that take us out of our life-work. May every believer here be completely consecrated to his Lord and Master, and work out the outline of the Divine plan which our Lord intends for him. May we be full of strength, and may we spend it all for Thee. O Lord, grant unto us not to live ignoble lives, but so to live that when the record of our life-work is read out before assembled worlds, we shall not be ashamed of the things we have uttered and thought and done.

Give us power for the preaching of Thy word. Bless, Lord, the entire Church of God, and prosper all ministries and holy services, and let the Name of Jesus Christ be glorified thereby. Bless our country. Give wisdom to our rulers. O Lord, fill with great wisdom those who have the management of affairs. The Lord keep the nations of the earth at peace. Give men the desire for liberty, but not for licence. Above all, let the spirit of Christ be among men. Lord, spare Israel, and now that savage hands have been lifted up against Thine own nation, do Thou save Thine ancient people. The Lord prevent these scenes of rapine and savagery and cruelty, and let not the name of God be used for such crimes. Lord, bring Israel back to Thee.

Meanwhile, great King of the Jews, Thou art also King of all nations under the heavens, and Thou wilt soon appear visibly to all men. This is a joy to us, that in our Father's house are many mansions; but sometimes this is a greater joy still, that Thou hast said, "I will come quickly and receive you unto Myself." Come quickly, dear Lord, and receive us unto Thyself. We ask it for Thy glory's sake. Amen. *θ.*

XCV.

GREAT GOD, we once thought it a high power, to call Thee our Father. We are even now profoundly astonished at being permitted to call Thee our Father; but we know Thee now too well to feel strange at the mercy-seat. Thou hast bidden us to come boldly, and we do come. To whom else *could* we go? When we were troubled, Thou gavest us rest; when we were bowed down, Thou didst lift us up. We come blessing Thee because we may come; but we come because we *must*. Thy love draws, and our necessity drives; and here we are to speak to Thee through Jesus Christ the well-beloved, the point of union between us, for He is near to us and we know that He is near to Thee. If we have thorns in our flesh, we come to our Father, that they may be taken out, or that we may have grace sufficient to bear them. If the very hairs of our head are numbered, then we know that our griefs are noticed. We bless Thee, Lord, that Thou dost condescend to help us in our griefs. Let not Thy children hesitate to tell Thee what it is that ails them.

O Thou blessed God, do not permit us to give way to our grief. There is a proneness to make so much of our sorrow, to let it crush out our joy in Thee. Whatever, Lord, ails us, it is nothing to what we have to give us joy and hope, for Thou hast chosen us before the foundation of the world. Thou hast brought us into the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. *Even Thou* cannot do so much as Thou hast done; for in the gift of Thy Son Thou hast bestowed upon Thy children all things; so that what we want is nothing compared to what we have.

Yet, Lord, look now upon Thy children. Oh, how foolish, how little are we! so everything but what we ought to be. We have often said with David: "So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before Thee. Nevertheless

I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory."

Glory be to the Lord God for the infinite mercy which has loved us and made us to love Him. Look down to-night upon Thy servants. There are many workers here to-night; they have come for a little food. Open the treasure-house to-night, that every one of the tribe of Israel may have his sack filled, as of old Thy servants did, and take it back that the household may be satisfied. O Lord, how often have we cried to Thee because we have not known what to say or how to teach. Our baskets were empty and we had no seed for the sower or bread for the eater. Oh, send every one away to-night rejoicing.

Perhaps there are some here, O Lord, who do not work O Thou blessed God, do Thou stir up idle professors. We would ask that they may be stirred out of their nest of idleness by a thorn. Be very tender, O Lord, to those who cannot work through reason of being incapable. Encourage them to bear with patience Thy holy will, that they may preach to those in the house by their endurance and gentle patience. Oh, how Thy servant Job sat on a dung-hill and preached such a sermon as even the apostles could not preach. Help us, we beseech Thee, Our Father, to do the same, and say: "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Oh, find out those who are especially crushed, who are broken alive on the wheel. Come, Holy Comforter, Thy infinite power will here be magnified, and put a song of joy where before there was a sigh of pain. Oh for the balm of heaven, now to be given to every mourning soul. O Lord, if it be Thy gracious will, let some be now brought to Christ who are now outside, who are lingering, who are standing just outside the feast of love, desiring to enter to partake of the King's bounty. Oh, *compel* them to enter,

and may they take Jesus to be theirs to-night; and may this be the beginning of day with them—the birthday of their entering into the family of God. Help the preacher. Anoint the lip, anoint the heart, and may the words of Thy book especially glow with the Spirit of Thy truth; so that men shall feel with their inmost spirits, and feel the fire of Thy Word in their bones. The Lord help us now for our Redeemer's sake. Amen.

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XCVI.

O GOD, all good things come from Thee. We confess in Thy presence that we are naked and miserable and poor apart from Thee. There is no other source of supply, and our needs are very great; and so often as we come unto Thee so often are we filled with good things. Thou hast never refused us yet. Thy word is very true: "Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

We have to mourn in Thy presence that our spiritual poverty has been occasioned by our not asking or by our asking amiss. Forgive us, O Lord, our slackness in prayer and our want of hungering and thirsting when we pray. Lead us into the very soul and essence of prayer. May we ask of Thee as though we meant and expected for Jesus Christ's sake those things for which we ask, and that Thou wilt certainly supply us. To-night we commune at our Communion-table for the first time this year; and we think we hear Thee saying to some of us, "Cease thy petition, for it shall be done unto thee." Lord, we do not ask for the half of Thy kingdom, but for the whole of it, that we may become gracious inheritors of it, and that by-and-by Thou wilt remember us when Thou comest in Thy glory.

Meanwhile our first prayer to-night, if we have one wish

above another, is for those who are not saved. We pray, O Lord, very fervently that such may be saved. We will give up asking a blessing for ourselves, if we may have others converted to Christ. If there are any here who have sons and daughters who have come into this year unconverted, we pray that the day may not end without it being done. Lord, call them in to-night, that this may be the time when they shall be compelled to come by the mighty power of Thy victorious grace. Lord, do save the many who have been sitting in these pews unconverted for years. Many are the arrows which have whizzed past their ears, but they have not been touched. O good Master, help us to draw the bow, that the arrow may find out some weak place in the armour, between the joints. Do not take away the power from the ministry, but very greatly add to it. Bless the labour of all who assist in any way the spread of the Gospel. May many here have to rejoice that the hand of the Lord is stretched out still, and that the saved ones are many within this house of prayer. O Lord, have mercy upon some who have quenched their convictions, who have done despite to a father's or a mother's prayers. Arrest them, O Crucified One, and bring them to their Father. Have mercy upon some who are growing careless because they have so much business. Let, Lord, no one here gain the world and lose his soul. Let those in business find a little space, so that they may not murder their souls to increase their gains.

Bless the young and bless the old; and if there be any in the eleventh hour hired ones, oh, let them have their penny. O God, let grace be very free in its appeals to-night, that many, many may recall the first night in the year as the time of their spiritual birth, and date everything from this day when they found their Saviour.

O Lord, since Thou dost permit us to ask large things of Thee, we would ask for ourselves and others that we

might have more grace. O dear, dear Saviour, we *do* love Thee, though we do not always act as if we did; but Thou *hast* won our hearts. There is a music in Thy Name which nowhere else can we find, and in Thy Gospel a grace which exists in no other thing. Yes! Thou art the desire of my soul, my transport. Oh, let us steep our souls in Gospel things until we become like a fleece soaked with the dew, until we are saturated with the blood of Christ and drip with it. Oh, we would live so that it may not be necessary to say we love Christ, but let it be shown in our acts. May there be a blessed contagiousness about our love to Jesus, so that others near us may begin to love Him too—scarce knowing why, perhaps at first, but led by the fruits of that love in our lives.

Dear Saviour, even take us with Thee to the Garden, and let us see Thee in Thy agony, even though Thou hast to say, "Sit thou here while I go and pray yonder." We know there are depths in Thy soul which we cannot fathom; but let us come near to Thee; and then, conquered by that grievous love, that loving grief, we would come forth to bear all things for Thy sake, and count all things but loss save the excellency of Thy knowledge.

Oh, dear Saviour, use every individual Christian here, that before we go home, ere our lamps be removed from the sanctuary, so use us that our lamps may burn on when we are gone. The Lord bless us in the service to-night, especially at the table; may it be a sweet, sweet season. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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XCVII.

O God of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of the whole earth shalt Thou be called, Thou alone art God. The gods of the heathen are idols, but our God made the heavens. We do with all

our hearts worship and adore Thee, at least so many of us as have been taught to know Thee and to discern Thee in the person of Thy dear Son. Thou art God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Triune God of Israel. Accept our homage as we present ourselves before Thee to-day.

We adore Thee that Thou art the God who hearest prayer. In vain do the heathen wait on Baal; but Thou dost hear the cry of the humble, and Thou dost not despise the voice of the penitent. We thank Thee that, through Jesus Christ Thy Son, Thy people have a ready entrance to Thy ear and heart. It is not a vain thing to wait upon the Lord, for they who so do shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles.

How may all here present themselves before Thee to-day? We have heard the words of Thy Covenant which Thou didst make with Thine ancient people, which Covenant they did break, though Thou wert a Father to them; but we Gentiles thank Thee for this Covenant; and now, in Jesus Christ, who has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, we come unto Thee. Now behold, Lord, we take hold of Thy Covenant, as it is in the person of Jesus; we come and shelter there, and we take Jehovah to be our God, our only God, for ever. Be our children's God, and the God of our children's children. O Lord, write Thy commandments on the fleshy tablets of our heart. Thou hast said, "I will put my law in their hearts and they shall not depart from Me." We do, Lord, hold on to Christ Jesus this morning, taking Him to be the Mediator of the New Covenant and trusting in Him by the power of His Spirit.

O Lord, keep us true unto Thyself for ever. Be unto us our God, let us be unto Thee *Thy* people for ever. And seeing it is so, we beseech Thee to bless Thy people to-day. We come to Thee and ask Thee to bless us as a Church and people with very special spiritual blessings. In tem-

poral things Thou art to be blessed indeed, for Thou hast dealt liberally with us. But in spiritual, O Lord, give this Church a spiritual blessing, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith if I will not open unto you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Thou hast appointed the promise for the fatherless and the widow. Thy people have proved Thee. They have given of their substance, and we do prove Thee, O Lord, according to this Thy gracious promise. Wilt Thou now bring us some distinct and special spiritual blessing, that Thy people may now see that Thou keepest the words of Thy promise faithfully. Oh, pour us out a blessing to-day! Begin to pour it out, and let not the windows of heaven be closed for many a year upon this people. Make us Christ-like, self-denying, prayerful, enthusiastic in the cause of Christ. Let us have life more abundantly, and be strong in the Lord.

And then, Lord, do Thou pour out a blessing upon the unconverted. Oh, begin this morning. Let every one within these gates be saved, may every rebellious one be conquered, and may every unconverted one be softened by the Spirit of God. May not one—man, woman, or child—go out of this house this morning unsaved; but may a sweet softening power, like the morning and evening dew that waiteth for no man, go over this congregation. Thou hast great power over man; O Spirit of the living God, who didst remove old chaos and old night, come this morning, and, wherever darkness and night are, brood and let there be light.

Oh for the forgiveness of sins! Forgive every one of us. Oh for a revelation of the Holy Spirit! Oh for quickening and sanctification! God grant these to us this day, we beseech Thee. If there be any people who think they are Thy people and are not, bring them to the touch-stone; and if there be any who desire to be Thine and are not, let them

now come to Thee. Thou hast said, "I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved which was not beloved." "Behold, Thou shalt call a nation that Thou knowest not, and nations that knew not Thee shall run unto Thee, because of the Lord Thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for He hath glorified Thee."

Oh, let this be so to-day. Do Thou grant us this spiritual blessing, we entreat it of Thee, O God, for the sake of Jesus, according to the word of Thy promises, which we have laid before Thee now. Bless our country, greatly bless those who are in authority. Bless all down to the hewer of wood and drawer of water. And let other nations have the like blessings, especially those nations who speak our mother tongue and are akin to us; and may the day come when there shall be one nationality, and we shall all be as one people, the people of the living God in heaven. May the Lord hear us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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XCVIII.

O LORD, our God, at all times do we need the Holy Spirit to help us in prayer; but there are special times of more conscious need than usual, and then we need to cry that we may be taught and may be given strength to pray, and that the very words in which we draw near to God should be indited by the Holy Spirit. O Lord, we are so weak, so sinful, that if Thou shouldst refuse to hear a single word we have to say, what should we do but stand silent and confess in our hearts that we have deserved this? But, O Lord, we bless Thee, Thou hast made a way in which Thou canst justify the ungodly, and canst bring to Thyself the most guilty, even through the precious atonement of Christ Jesus. Behold, we plead His sufferings, His substitutionary agony, and beg to be accepted in Thy Beloved. We are empty, but in Him dwells the fulness of the Godhead.

Now we stand at the foot of the Cross, and we look up to Jesus for everything—the sinner's Saviour, the sick man's help, the poor man's wealth, the bearer of all our burdens. Jesus, be to us all what Thou hast ever been to all the sinners in the world! Help us to prove in our own persons all the adorable fulness of Thine inexhaustible self. May our weakness only result in our understanding more of the infinite strength laid up for us in Him who is mighty to save. O Thou blessed God, it is sweet to be near Thee, to come right out of ourselves, hearing no longer the words, "Cursed is he that trusteth in man," but knowing that blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord. This is the joy of our spirit at this moment, to have an all-sufficient God, ever faithful, full of grace and truth, and never turning His back upon one of His children.

Now, Lord, look this morning upon all Thine own children. Take from Thy children all consciousness of sin, and let them hear a sweet whisper of Jesus; and if there be any defilement, may they come to Jesus again this morning, for, blessed be Thy Name, the fountain is not open only for sinners, for there is perpetual atonement for those who believe. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous. Let us evermore cleanse ourselves at this blessed fountain.

Make Thy people to be lights in the surrounding darkness. Let no Christian attempt to live unto himself. May there be about us an earnest desire to help others, and may we have much love towards all men. Help us to love the Saviour first, and then to love men for the sake of Jesus, and seek their conversion through Him. Oh, make every one of us useful in some way in bringing men to the feet of Jesus our Lord. Now look upon those of us who are called to lead Thy Church. Give us more grace. We are of all men most miserable without more grace.

Remember this Church, and keep it still as under the

shadow of Thy wing. Oh that the ministry of Thy servant here may be more fruitful than it has ever been, and the ministry carried on in the Sunday-school, teachers, missionaries, and others—all the agencies which are used here and elsewhere for the ingathering of Thy people. Sanctify them, and let Jesus Christ see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied with the result of His servants' labours.

Chasten us, Lord, as Thou wilt. How often have we cried to Thee that we may have bodily affliction, rather than Thy work should be delayed for a moment; and so we say still, "Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come," and our heart's deepest desire is this. Grant that the weather may be so ruled by Thy goodness that as the result good harvests may come. Bless the Government with wisdom and the Queen with happiness. Quieten the parts of the country that are troubled, that all enmities may cease, and the kingdom of our blessed Lord be extended everywhere. Bless Thy servant's preaching, and let it result in the extension of Thy Word and the knowledge of Thy Gospel. We ask these things for our Redeemer's sake. Amen.

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XCIX.

O God, Thou art the God that hearest prayer. This is Thy special memorial throughout the ages. We believe and are sure that Thou hearest the cries which we Thy children put up to Thee through Jesus Christ Thy Son. Many a time have we as a people implored a blessing in this place; and the blessing has ever come. From week to week we hear a voice that sweetly calls to a knowledge of Jesus, and to live in Him. Lord, Thou hast made us to hear many sweet testimonies of what the Spirit of God is doing in our midst, and Thy dear children have come to implore a bessing, and have been rejoiced in heart because the blessing has been bestowed; and many here are proofs,

and many will yet be proofs, that Thou art a God that hearest prayer. There are many here who are now Thine, in answer to a father's prayers; many have put on Christ who have been pursued by a godly wife. Lord, because Thou hast inclined Thy ear unto us and heard us, therefore we now cast ourselves upon Thee. To-night it is our petition that Thou wilt save many within these walls.

There are some here for whom we have prayed oft. Lord, let these prayers be remembered, and let the petitions of Thy people at last prevail, and go up accepted before Thy throne. There may be some here, however, who have never been prayed for, living in the world and no man caring for their souls. O Lord, we would pray for such to-night with seven-fold urgency, that, whereas they now wander in the wilderness, the Lord may find them as He found Hagar of old, and may they in astonishment cry, "Thou God seest me." Open a well of living waters, or rather open their eyes to see it. O Lord, there are some old people here who must soon go the way of all flesh, but who, we fear, will not go the way of Thy people. Very soon in the course of nature they must sink into their graves; but, alas! they will sink into hell, unless Thy mighty grace prevents it. Oh, save the aged.

We know that this house holds to-night many who are called Christians but whose businesses occupy them from morning to night, with little time to think of Thee and Thy worship. Yet it may be that there is but a step between them and death. O Lord, help them to find leisure enough to attend to this; let them not mind the shop and lose their souls. May they turn unto God and seek Christ. There are many young persons here just entering on life. Oh that they may have Christ with them early in the morning, that their first enterprises may be sanctified, that they may have an altar as soon as they have a tent.

And, O God, remember the youngest of all. How glad

we have been that the girls and boys should love Thee; but we are concerned that many of the little children should learn to lisp Thy name. Help Thy servants to look out for children, that they may be made early children of the living God. In one word, save *all* of us. Let every one here be numbered with Thy sons on earth, and in glory everlasting.

At this time, O thou great King of Zion, give power to all ministers of the Word, to preach perfectly and completely the Gospel of the Cross of Christ. O Lord, teach Thy ministers, that they may teach others. Take off their minds from all minor topics, and let Thy ministers as one man preach Christ—Christ crucified, and determined to know nothing among men save this one thing. Send out preachers of the Word, that there may come grand times of revival in the Church.

Meanwhile we pray Thee also to bless the membership of Thy Church. Let every Christian grow in grace. May every believer be a yet more perfect believer; and with the full assurance of his own salvation, may there come a yearning after the souls of others.

Lord, arouse the entire Church out of its sluggishness. If all the Churches of God were on fire, what might we not expect? O Thou who walkest among the seven candlesticks, trim the lamps and let them shine in the darkness. Oh for converts, as many as the leaves of the forest, or the drops of the ocean, or the sands on the sea-shore! Oh that the kingdoms of this world would soon become the kingdoms of the Lord Christ! Give us a portion of Thy blessing to-night, O our Father. Thy servant is not worthy to speak in Thy name, or even to untie the latches of Thy shoes; but *do* speak by him, so that by this poor clay some sinner may to-night find sight, and be made free by the blessed word that cometh out of Thy mouth. We ask it, Lord Jesus, for Thine own glory's sake. Amen.

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C.

O THOU for ever blessed God, we get away from all things that hold us down below, and would come unto Thee. We would not loiter or linger here, but get us up to the golden streams, and to the sea of glass; and we would stand before Thy blazing throne in the strength of Jesus Christ, making mention of that matchless Name and through Him having fellowship with our God, who is a consuming fire. When we think of the splendour of Thy presence, we are ready to tremble; but we hear a voice that says, "Come boldly," and we accept the invitation. We speak boldly in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Bless the Lord, bless the Lord for ever! We would be among the number who cry day and night, "Bless the Lord, whose mercy endureth for ever!"

We would acknowledge our indebtedness. Thou didst choose us before ever the world was, we as yet having no being. Yet in Thy Book all our members were written. Thou didst aforetime intend us to be partakers of eternal life. Oh love, matchless love, that in the old eternity made an infinitely precious gift on our behalf! We praise Thee, O God, for the gift of Jesus, and for our gift through Him, before ever the earth was. Oh, the love that sent Him here to take upon Him our nature and our form! Oh, the love that led Him to the cross, bearing upon Himself our sins! We would dwell upon each one of these points, and pour our very hearts; we would be filled with astonishment at this mighty love.

Then Thou didst send Thy Holy Spirit to let us know our sonship, and brought us to Jesus. Blessed was the day which took our sins away, and sent us on our way with a new song in our mouths. We cannot think of it without rapture. Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away! And since, Thou hast been all mercy, nothing

else but mercy, strokes of the rod full of mercy, hidings of the face, but full of mercy; and Thou hast paved our way with mercies, Thou hast made our gates of carbuncles, yea, Thou hast not given to us as a king only, but only as a God can give. O blessed God, we stand now before Thy throne, we present to Thee our deepest love. Oh that we could love Thee infinitely more! Oh that we could return love in some measure commensurate with Thine! But that cannot be. We would come this morning and plunge right into the sea of Thy love to us, feeling that nothing else can satisfy our longings.

O Love, seeing Thou hast done all this, we ask that Thou wilt help us to act as we should do. Oh, let no child of Thine sit in the ashes this morning. Let us put on the jewels Thou hast provided for Thine own. Let not one hang his harp upon the willow, but praise Thee. Joy becometh Thy house, and joy becometh Thy people. Love beyond degree. Oh, come now and make Thy children joyful in Thy house of prayer. Spirit Divine, come and touch every heart, and make it glow until this house shall be like one great censer, so that the whole shall ascend unto heaven in a cloud of frankincense accepted before the most High. Blessed be Jehovah: the God of the whole earth shall He be called. Blessed be His glorious Name henceforth and evermore!

Now hear the cry of Thy servants. Blessed is the day that has called us here. There is no place so hallowed as this place; there are no songs so hallowed as the songs of Thy people. Oh, withdraw not Thy presence from us. From this day do Thou bless us with sevenfold blessing. Let the labours of Thy dear servants who have spoken in our absence be greatly blessed. Now we again stand among the furrows. Oh, fill our baskets with good seed, and let there come forth a bounteous harvest. Lord, bless this Church and people after the manner in which Thou hast

been wont to bless them: only multiply the benefits. Blessing and praise to Thy Name for every brother and sister safely home. We wish it was our case to be with them. Raise up the Church, that in the ranks of the hosts of God there may be no blanks, that as one united host ever growing they may march upward, melting away in the glory.

Let us all know the pardon of our sins. And give some especial blessing to each child of Thine. Remove some trial, or give grace to bear it. Let us find some fresh sweetness in a promise, or help us to obey some precept which has been forgotten. Give us some Christmas blessing which shall make us love our Father with our whole heart, and make this in the deepest sense a happy day for us. We cannot help praying for any here whose children are unconverted. O our God, this morning Thy servant praises Thee because Thou art his father's God, and the God of his children. Thou blessed God, wilt Thou so look on every one here, so that we may be an unbroken family in heaven, and may every one here be gathered into heaven at last.

God bless our country. The Lord remember all those in authority at this time. Bless the Queen; bless poor Ireland. Send peace and happiness to that country, and may the policy of right and justice be successful. Bring all nations to fear and love the Lord Jesus, yea, and the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and amen.

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CI.

O THOU Holy One, we worship Thee with soul and mind; yea, with our whole life and strength we adore our Preserver, Redeemer, and Father. O Lord, we feel so weak, so little, whenever we dare to approach Thy throne. How can we hope to approach Thee? We bless Thee, however, that Thou hast bridged the great gulf between Thy creature man and Thine own great glory; for Thou hast given us

Christ Jesus, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. And yet He is true man. He was compassed about with infirmities, and bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Now, we feel that through Jesus we can draw very near; yet we do not lay aside one jot of our reverence, since even now Thou hast said of Thyself by Thy Spirit, "Our God is a consuming fire."

Lord, we are afraid to pray, lest we should not pray aright. Until we have made mention of the name of Jesus, our tongue is tied. But hast Thou not called us sons, joint heirs with Jesus Christ? But then, have we been born into Thy family? O Thou Blessed One, cause great heart-searchings to go on amongst us; and if we feel sincerely that we have been born again, then let us feel another reverence, as the reverence of children to a father, and may we come with filial awe, humbly asking mercy through Jesus Christ, Thy Son.

Especially, Lord, do we come with our thanksgivings. We are in debt for every word of comfort, for all that makes life bearable, for hope, for love, for strength, to Thyself; for, apart from Thee we are condemned already by our transgressions, which mar our holiest things. Wert Thou not infinitely merciful, how could we hope to stand in Thy presence? But through Jesus we feel that even we may stand in the presence of the Holy God.

Our Father, put away the sin of the past week, all the sins of business, all the sins of the domestic circle, all the sins of the heart and the tongue. Forgive the transgressions in our holy things, for we have not done as we should in our holiest desires. And do Thou give us a cleansing from the result of sin. Let us find ourselves in Jesus, because Thou hast delivered us from the bondage of sin. Thou hast brought us out into the liberty of holiness, that liberty wherewith Christ does make us free. Lord, work holiness in us. Take out of our hearts all envy, hatred,

malice, and uncharitableness, refining us, if need be, by fire. Make us to be partakers of Thy holiness. We know this is one of the wonders of faith, that it works righteousness. May we have a pure mind, a mind fitly balanced. May the body be kept pure. Keep us from all excess of the appetites. Preserve us from all inclinations of the flesh. Oh, may we, soul and body, be conformed to the nature of Christ, who is the Second Adam. Oh that we may have Him in us, Christ the hope of glory.

O Lord, give us in this Church the power of holiness. Make us a Christ-loving, God-serving people. Oh, keep us near Thyself. May we believe the truth and love the truth, and may our spirit be the true spirit. Let the whole Church be visited by the Spirit of God, and the entire, united Church of God be sanctified, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners.

The Lord bless at this time the sick people and such as are appointed unto death. The Lord make their sick beds scenes of triumph. Oh, now, let the fulness of Divine strength be displayed in them. As for those who are in health, the Lord give us grace to serve Thee patiently. God bless us in seeking the conversion of our fellow-men. Bless every worker here, especially bestow a blessing upon the workers among the children, the instructors of those new-born to God. The Lord bless those who are in any way seeking to establish the Kingdom.

These are poor prayers of ours. All that we can say is, that they come from our heart. Lord, Thou knowest who are praying here and who are not. Oh, put the tear of penitence into the careless eye, put the throb of contrition into the heart of those who are unsaved; and if there be any here who even doubt the inspiration of Thy word or the Deity of Thy Son, let them be brought to Jesus on the spot. Our faith in Christ is great, that He is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think.

The Lord bless our country. Let every blessing rest upon the Queen and the Government; and may the grace of God come to all ranks and conditions of men; and do Thou send yet more prosperity. May this be a better year for the conversion of the earth from darkness to the infinite light of the Gospel than the years past by. Nor do we forget to pray for other countries where Thy Name is fragrant. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven, for Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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CII.

FATHER, when we lift up our eyes to Thee, we feel we have a thousand requests. We are so poor and needy that the roll of our requests can scarcely be written. Yet if Thou dost give us one thing, we shall have all we need—it is a sense of our oneness with Christ. Oh that we may have a view of the Lord Jesus as representing us, as being to us our hope, our life, our all. Oh, favour us to-night, we pray Thee, with one of those seasons of revival such as we remember in times past, when the Master has been very near to us. We have been ready to go back to Jerusalem. We have been troubled in our souls; but the Master has come unto us, and He has said, "Peace be unto you," and a great calm has fallen over our souls.

Dear Master, Thy presence relieves despondency, conquers doubt, gives back joy and peace, and brings us to the very gate of heaven. O Lord, we do pray that Christ may be present in our midst to-night. Be near, dear Lord, while we are singing the evening hymns, praying for an increase of faith, and preaching the Word. Make us the Lord's dear children. In very truth and in spirit may we hear the voice of Him who walketh among the seven candlesticks. Oh for a sight of Christ! Oh for a sense of

Christ's love shed abroad in our hearts! Deny it not, we pray Thee, to one in this place who loves Thee. Give peace to all who are in trouble at this time, and let the weary heart find in Jesus a true and Divine resting-place. Let many come to Thee, Master, this night; and may this Church be strengthened, and a great ingathering of souls take place. Let this be so, Lord. We ask it because Thou art our God and Saviour. Amen.

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